

## Growing Physical Intimacy in Marriage

Series: Making Relationships Work: Love, Sex & Marriage

November 5, 2017 – Brad Bailey & Marlo Blandford

*Our goal is not to make sex more central but more healthy. The goal is to guard and guide a gift ... and that includes confronting both indulgence and inhibition...obsession and suppression.*

Two simple facts that shape our perspective....

- The most \_\_\_\_\_ physical intimacy lies within the covenant of marriage.
- Physical intimacy remains a significant and sensitive area of potential \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage.

Five qualities to guide the gift of physical intimacy in marriage

1. \_\_\_\_\_: Growing beyond negative experiences and associations (issues of fear, trust, resentment, insecurity, etc.)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ in focus: Growing beyond selfish or selfless focus to that of serving one another

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 (VOICE)

*Husbands and wives have reciprocal duties. Each husband has the responsibility to meet his wife's sexual desires, and each wife should do the same for her husband. <sup>4</sup> In marriage neither the husband nor the wife should act as if his or her body is private property—your bodies now belong to one another, and together they are whole. <sup>5</sup> So do not withhold sex from one another, unless both of you have agreed to devote a certain period of time to prayer. When the agreed time is over, come together again so that Satan will not tempt you .."*

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3. \_\_\_\_\_ attachment: Growing beyond physical objectifying to personal intimacy

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.

Song of Solomon 7:6-9

How beautiful you are and how pleasing,  
O love, with your delights!  
Your stature is like that of the palm,  
and your breasts like clusters of fruit.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ in expectations: Growing beyond the false "performance" ideals to that of enjoying connecting amidst real life patterns

5. \_\_\_\_\_ in effort: Growing beyond passivity that neglects or negates uniting physically.

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**To be potentially addressed next week:** What is a question or aspect of relational life you would like us to explore how God's Word or wisdom addresses? (Tear off this bottom section...place in box at back of room or use the Vineyard "app." )

## Growing Physical Intimacy in Marriage

Series: Making Relationships Work: Love, Sex & Marriage

November 5, 2017 – Brad Bailey & Marlo Blandford

Intro

Today...we are **continuing** our **Fall focus** on relationships...entitled “**Making Relationships Work: Love, Sex, and Marriage.**” Making relationships work involves how we relate as male and female... that involves as sexual beings. So **last week** we began **hearing God’s design and desire** for **physical intimacy in marriage.**

**We noted that God describes in the opening account of who we are...in Genesis... of creating us as male and female...as a complimentary nature...as a gift to one another...and one which can be united in life-long union. [1]**

***Sexual intimacy is designed to unite us.***

*As Tim Keller describes...*

*“Sex is a way to give yourself totally to somebody else and to say, “I belong completely and totally and exclusively to you.” - Tim Keller*

**So we want to continue** with how **God speaks into our way of relating ...enabling us to grow** in the gift of sexual intimacy in marriage.

I want to note that...

***Our goal is not to make sex more central but more healthy. The goal is to guard and guide a gift ... and that includes confronting both indulgence and inhibition...obsession and suppression.***

I know that **many here are unmarried**... and hearing about growing in the gift of physical intimacy in marriage may seem a bit irrelevant at best.

It might seem **like going to an investment seminar** when you’re **broke.**

**Marlo (who will be sharing as well) and I both been unmarried and listening to stories about married life...we know it can be a little hard.** But I hope we can all appreciate that we all, as sexual beings, do well to become more grounded and guided by God's design for sexual expression....whether for our future marriage potential, for **past reflection** of our experiences, or for **perspective** as we **relate to the current culture** and mixed messages we hear.

**There are two common ideas** about sex and marriage that may need to be challenged. One is that it’s **drudgery**...and the other is that it is a **dream.**

It’s **either portrayed** as the end of all sexual enjoyment... where there is so real sexual excitement... after all, nearly all sexual encounters in television is never of married couples.

Or...there can be the assumption that it's the **dream in which all sexual tensions disappear...** and it's just a process of perpetual passion.

So here are

**Two simple facts that shape our perspective....**

- **The most satisfying physical intimacy lies within the covenant of marriage.**

**That is a fact.** It bears out in survey after survey. Those safely within the co called "confines" of marriage...are enjoying their sexual intimacy most. [2]

At the same time....

- **Physical intimacy remains a significant and sensitive area of potential conflict in marriage.**

While the bonds of marriage provide the context to truly give oneself to another...there are plenty of real life dynamics which remain challenging ...including the differences in expectations and desires... the effects of conflict and trust... and the various seasons of life. The truth is that physical intimacy is never just physical... it not only has the power to unite...but when in tension...it has the power to create distance and rejection. [3]

**So we want to consider....how we can grow** in guarding and guiding the gift of physical intimacy in marriage.

Consider...

**Five qualities to guide the gift of physical intimacy in marriage**

*[To address the first two...invite Marlo Blandford...who most know serves as Pastor of children and families]*

So, a couple weeks ago we had an event for 3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> graders at another Vineyard church down the road. So I am pulling out of the parking lot back there and am sitting at a light on Venice and Centinela. In my car are 4 10 year old girls. Fun right. My daughter is in the front seat, and there are three other 10 year old girls in the back seat and we hear them pointing and giggling. We are stopped right next to the banner announcing this series....Love, Sex and Marriage. And they are like...it says sex. And my daughter without missing a beat ... oh that is talking about gender. So it really means Love. Male Female and Marriage. Not that other kind of sex. And the three girls go, oh, of course that is what it means. And then they all looked at me, And I said, of course that's what it means.

I feel like those 10 year old girls...it isn't the easiest thing to talk about....a little awkward. So I'll just embrace that awkwardness say, I like sex. My parents are here. I like sex with that

guy. (We got married and said I do-I do you and you do me and we don't do anybody else) ...I'm for sex. It's fun. It feels good. God designed it and us—and it is great. But- I hate the harm that it does to us as human beings, when out of God's plan. There is great harm to children and adults who have experienced sexual abuse. There is much pain involved in the misuse of sex. In our marriages, it is a huge source of a lot of pain and division and misunderstanding. I hear about it just about every day, and it breaks my heart. I want to speak to you today as a pastor that has heard and counseled a lot about this very thing, and also as a person who has been through it-all; the amazingness of sex, and have also experienced the tremendous disappointment, betrayal and ugliness of it. And I have also had large chunks of time that I was waiting for it as well.

So I want to begin with growing in....

## **1. Healthy desires: Growing beyond negative experiences and associations (issues of fear, trust, resentment, insecurity, etc.)**

I was single for 23 years-the first 23 years of my life, then married for 6 years, then not married for 13 years, and then now married for 11. (And it adds up to 53-so you don't get distracted trying to do the math).

From all that experience: Here is the first thing I want to say today:

If because of what you have done sexually in your past, or what has been done to you sexually-if because of those things your view of sex is that it is dirty or repulsive ...I want to remind that God does not look at sex that way. Here is what God says :

So God created human beings in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup>Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Genesis 1:27-28a

It was the holy and good God who thought up human anatomy and sexual attraction. God saw all that He made and said it was very good....and then He told them...Be fruitful and multiply...go to it. Get it on....God commanded Adam and Eve to come together. They did so with his blessing

I think the first step in the process of restoration of a healthy desire for physical intimacy in marriage is this:

### **Step One-Know that God gave us sex as a beautiful gift.**

If you have a negative view of sex-if you associate sex with shame and abuse, this will be your first step: To really know that this is God's gift, and that throughout Scriptures the joy of sex is celebrated within marriage.

So first, Understand that sex is a beautiful, wonderful and mysterious (magical, awesome amazing stunning, breathtaking) gift from God. Very good.

**Second: Find freedom from shame.**

A lot of us, married and single, are carrying around a lot of shame from past sexual experiences. Some of us have earned that shame—we've done wrong in this area. We have misused God's beautiful gift. Some of us should not feel shame—there were wrongs done to us. But either way, if you know the life changing love of Jesus—if you have come to a point of repentance—sorrow and turning away from your old life and sins— Here is what you can experience. Freedom.

**Romans 8:1-2 NLT**

*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And because you belong to him, the power<sup>[a]</sup> of the life-giving Spirit has freed you<sup>[b]</sup> from the power of sin that leads to death.*

We have a shameful past, but we have a better future. We used to walk in foolishness and rebellion, but now we walk in newness of life. Freedom from shame.

Last point for this section on restoring a healthy desire for physical intimacy in marriage is this:

**Third: Find Freedom from Anger:** I know I am wading into dangerous waters but I have to speak of sexual abuse. But while many of us are living in unforgiveness of ourselves for past sexual sins—there are also many who are living in unforgiveness and anger to those who have sexually hurt us. I get it. I get it. But it isn't helping. Have you heard something like this quote: “Living in unforgiveness and anger is like drinking rat poison and then waiting for the rat to die. It is only hurting you.

I am not saying that you need to approve of or condone the behavior of someone toward you. Or, that your forgiveness lets anyone off the hook. I'm saying that you can trust justice to God. Jeremiah 17:10-

***But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.” (Jeremiah 17:10 NLT)***

Even if the person who hurt you is not repentant you can decide to stop resenting and leave it to God to deal with the person.

- Romans 12: 19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,<sup>l</sup> says the Lord.

I've actually experienced this freedom from anger and shame because of the mercy and grace of Jesus. I feel like it is my special gift of freedom, and it is available to all—no matter what your past.

*A second quality to grow physical intimacy in marriage is...*

## 2. Mutuality in focus: Growing beyond selfish or selfless focus to that of serving one another

This may be the most important quality which God calls us to.

Most of us can be selfish...or too selfless. [5] The Bible says... [6]

Last week Brad read a passage from I Corinthians 7 that is amazing as it relates to sexual intimacy in marriage. I want to pull three verses from that passage and read them again today:

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 (VOICE)

*Husbands and wives have reciprocal duties.* Each husband has the responsibility to meet his wife's *sexual* desires, and each wife should do the same for her husband. <sup>4</sup> In marriage neither the husband nor the wife should act as if his or her body is private property—your bodies now belong to one another, *and together they are whole.* <sup>5</sup> So do not withhold *sex* from one another, unless both of you have agreed to devote a certain period of time to prayer. When the agreed time is over, come together again so that Satan will not tempt you ..”

Here in the Scriptures...Paul is inspired by God with an idea so different from the world at the time. It's the idea of mutuality...and mutual pleasure. [6b]

Man, this speaks strongly to sexual intimacy in marriage. It keeps us from being **too selfish** or **too selfless**.

I am going to give you **EXTREME examples of this**: but ones that I have absolutely heard in the last two months.

A mutual acquaintance of a friend said that since the beginning of their marriage, her husband has insisted that they have sex every day during the week-Monday - Friday-and twice a day on the weekends.

No matter what the circumstances-no matter what was going on-this was a deal breaker. Can you imagine how she felt? She said she was being crushed under the weight of his demands-and that sex became an all encompassing dread. Selfish.

Want to hear another true story. A married woman in her 40's said to me, if I never had sex again-I would be so happy. So her husband knows that she will be available for sex but it is for his pleasure alone. Sounds Selfless-but missing the point that in the mutual act of physical intimacy-they become whole-what a healthy picture God's design is.

Those two examples are extremes-but let's take a look at our own lives this morning.

The following portion of this sermon is going to be one of generalities. If you personally or as a couple don't fall into these categories, you are not weird-you can still apply these general concepts to your relationship or yourself-they just might be flipped, right?

I have a secret: Generally speaking, men and women are different. Is that news to anyone in this room?

The arena of sexuality highlights these differences in a big way. In general, men think about sex twice as much as women. (In general). They also have a stronger sex drive, which is less vulnerable to distraction and influence.

I'm going to let a sex expert explain this better than I could:

*"Women's desire is more contextual, more subjective, more layered on a lattice of emotion... For men, by contrast, sex is simpler and more straightforward for them. That doesn't mean that men don't seek intimacy, love and connection in a relationship, just as women do. They just view the role of sex differently. Women want to talk first, connect first, then have sex. For men, sex is the connection. Sex is the language men use to express their tender loving vulnerable side. It is their language of intimacy." - Esther Perel.*

**The difference between men and women sexually is often this:**

- **Women generally find that emotional connection... and being personally valued... leads to sexual desire.**

- **Men generally feel sexual desire as a means to feeling emotionally connected.**

Look at that-Does that have a deep potential for misunderstanding?

Yes it does: Often times

- Because of the misconception of their differences, men feel their wives just can't appreciate sexual pleasure... or worse... just don't care about their husband's desires.

> In truth... women are as sexual as men... just sexually different. Most of us do care about our husbands desires... but we may feel intimidated at how to relate when our physical desires are so different.

And women often feel that all men want is the physical act of sex.

> Ladies, In truth, men don't just want sexual release. They want to be wanted... They desire a connection as much as women do... only it's met in the process of physical intimacy rather than precedes it.

Isn't it sad that because of our differences we can misunderstand each other so tragically?

What can we do? How do we meet beyond the perception of these extremes?

Can we get beyond the resentment and tension...and realize that our differences provide a more healthy dynamic for sex....and if we can meet in the middle and understand and appreciate each others differences---that we can have better a better sex life?

Our differences can make us whole: We read that earlier...

<sup>4</sup>In marriage neither the husband nor the wife should act as if his or her body is private property—your bodies now belong to one another, *and together they are whole*.

Know what this looks like in real life?

Communication. Negotiation. Really hearing, and understanding and appreciating our differences. Being brave enough to bare our wants and needs to each other. Vulnerability.

Here is where it gets really practical and real for healthy sexuality:

You as a married couple should be having more sex than one partner wants and less sex than the other partner wants. And that's good. Very good. How God made you.

[BRAD returns]

*A third quality to grow physical intimacy in marriage is...*

### **3. Relational attachment: Growing beyond physical objectifying to personal intimacy**

**What do I mean by relational attachment?** It **might seem obvious** that physical intimacy is relational. But **like with anything that involves a physical stimulus**, we **can become attached to the physical stimulus** apart from anything personal.

The truth is that there are **driving forces** within us and around us that encourage attachment to a non-relational object rather than a real relationship. It is the lure of lust...that everyone will face. It is easy to become **aroused by the sight of something**. And when it comes to physical intimacy...that can not only **bring arousal and pleasure ...but without any of the personal investment** involved in actual relationship.

And...our culture knows it **can sell that commodity** ...from **clothing to TV shows to pornography**. Providing that physical stimulation has become the **largest use of the internet**.

[7]

It's neither our focus...nor my intent to fully engage the massive challenge that the internet has brought to pornography. But we **cannot ignore that it is having a huge effect** on the very nature of boys and men...as well as women...which negatively effects physical intimacy in marriage.

*“Our **cultural tendency** is to **sexualize those less known** and **de-sexualize those we have given ourselves to...and who have given themselves to us**. We need to reverse that. We need to focus on the body that is ours to love.”*



The Bible includes a beautiful exchange of love...that is very sexual in nature...but what sets it apart...is that the focus is on love being enthralled with the others body...not simply on the body ...nor on just any body.

**Listen to the words** of Proverbs...and Song of Solomon...

### **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.

**The focus is on the wife of one's youth... being satisfied not with any breasts...but "her breasts"...staying captivated not by lust...but by her love.**

### **Song of Solomon 7:6-9**

How beautiful you are and how pleasing,  
O love, with your delights!  
Your stature is like that of the palm,  
and your breasts like clusters of fruit.

We need to break free from the attachments to bodies we do not know...and become focused and satisfied with the bodies one has truly been given if married.

Similarly....

*A fourth quality to grow physical intimacy in marriage is...*

### **4. Normality in expectations: Growing beyond the false "performance" ideals to that of enjoying connecting amidst real life patterns**

What do I mean by "normality in expectation"?

I am referring to the problem of our cultural approach of developing "performance" ideals... in which physical intimacy is framed as a performance.

Lauren Winner

*"Secular culture, after all, has made a fetish of sexual technique, suggesting that if we just follow the steamy tips of experts, sex will be frequent, and always a fantastic production. This is the message that creeps into our e-mail inboxes in the seemingly incessant unsolicited ads for potions, pills, and devices that will "increase sexual*

*performance" (itself a disturbing phrase suggesting that sex is a theatrical production to be enacted according to the dictates of a director, a play cloaked in costumes and props)." [8]*

**We need to avoid reducing what is deeply profound and personal to that of performance.**

It is good to value the pleasure that satisfies... and even explore that as two people who care about one another. But when it's reduced to performance it robs us.

Allowing sexual intimacy to become defined by performance is a tragic loss of the real joy that is intended. [9]

Imagine what God provided.... The garden in which male and female are told to unite... with no instructions...no images...just the fun of figuring it out. That may give us a good sense of the freedom we should enjoy.

We must **reclaim pleasure from performance**... and guard ourselves from the place in which pleasure itself **becomes idolatrous**.

As Winner goes on to state:

Lauren Winner

*"We can also articulate a Christian alternative to the ideal of sex as an otherworldly, illicit romance, an escape from domestic life. Our humanity cannot be separated from the moments of joy, anger, friendship, sadness, attention, confusion, tedium, and wonder that unfold over time and in specific places. Our task is not to cultivate moments when eros can whisk us away from our ordinary routines, but rather to love each other as eros becomes imbedded in, and transformed by, the daily warp and woof of married life.*

Moms and dads do need to be intentional about making time for sex, but Christians can perhaps remind the broader culture that good sex, by definition, is part and parcel of, not antagonistic to, ordinary marriages and domestic life."

I believe that the gift of physical intimacy is most free when it is free to become a more normal part of real life... with real bodies amidst real schedules and real feelings. **Sexual freedom is as much a freedom from false ideals**; a freedom to enjoy the sacred gift when **woven into the natural rhythms of life**.

A final fifth quality to grow physical intimacy in marriage...really surrounds all others...and that is ...

## **5. Intentionality in effort: Growing beyond passivity that neglects or negates uniting physically.**

While we should avoid some false ideal of performance...we also have to confront how our culture can demand our attention to so many options...that we neglect or negate the intimacy that roots the one relationship that we are called by God to honor being united in.

Being intentional starts in the heart. We need to choose to make it a priority.

But it will also be served by communicating. It's hard for many people to talk about physical intimacy...because it can be an **area of insecurity...tension...** but if we can acknowledge those challenges...we can grow. And it is helpful to acknowledge that the **experience evolves** through the **seasons of life. If a couple can communicate about the changes that evolve through the seasons of life...physical intimacy can be a rich part of one's relationship in one's 30's ...one's 50's and even one's 70's.**

**What matters most is communicating one's care for the other.**

### **CONCLUSION –**

Physical intimacy in marriage was intended to reflect the love that flows in covenant. And as such, we want to conclude reading the words which espouse the highest qualities of love... in the poetic text of 1 Corinthians... and apply it to the nature of physical intimacy... by using that term wherever love is described.

We want to invite us to let God speak to us. So we will read these words as our closing prayer. Would you close your eyes as we pray.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4-6 (NIV)**

**Physical intimacy is patient.**

**Physical intimacy is kind.**

**Physical intimacy does not envy.**

**Physical intimacy does not boast, it is not proud.**

**Physical intimacy is not rude.**

**Physical intimacy is not self-seeking.**

**Physical intimacy is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.**

**Physical intimacy does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.**

### **Resources:**

Among many great resources, two resources that I would recommend which integrity of thought and heart, are:

Christian Sex Rules: A guide to what's allowed in the bedroom by Louis and Melissa McBurney - <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2008/september/christian-sex-rules.html>  
An exceptionally healthy short guide to the qualities that should guide sexual behavior in marriage by one of the long term leading couples in this area.

**Intimacy Revealed: 52 Devotions to Enhance Sex in Marriage** by [J Parker](#) (Author)

Written for women, but equally speaks to men, this is exceptional well written...and show integrity in applying Scripture. (Available as Kindle download or printed book.)

### Notes:

1. Regarding the uniting factor,

J. Parker notes...

“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love, it would be utterly scorned.” — Song of Songs 8:6-7

Song of Songs is the only book of the Bible dedicated to celebrating the sexual love between a husband and a wife. In this passage, the wife gives a clear picture of why their sexual love is so meaningful. Their intimacy comes from an unyielding love and commitment to one another: “Like a seal over your heart.” In Bible times, a seal guaranteed security or indicated ownership. Our marriage vows, lived out day-to-day, provide security and a sense of possession or belonging. “My beloved is mine and I am his” (Song of Songs 2:16, also 6:3). Sex within marriage isn’t merely a physical act, but rather an expression of our unrelenting covenant of love. – From Parker, J.. Intimacy Revealed: 52 Devotions to Enhance Sex in Marriage (pp. 7-8). HHH Books. Kindle Edition.

And...

“This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” — Genesis 2:24 (NLT) “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” — Deuteronomy 6:4

What do these two passages have in common? In Hebrew, the word translated as “one”—referring to husband and wife and then to God—is the same: echad. We worship a monotheistic God, a single entity who can be viewed as three persons as well. Which is a bit difficult to mentally grasp. But in marriage, we get a taste of this truth when two whole individuals join together in covenant marriage and sexual intimacy with one another. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are interconnected, interwoven, three persons in one, a husband and wife are

connected with one another. Even in that moment of physical intimacy, it's clear that two distinct persons are joined together. They are two, yet one. Sex isn't doing its job if you never feel that intense connection with your husband. Yes, there is a definite role in marriage for the quickie, the physical, even adventurous sex. However, God's ultimate plan is that we experience what He has—a sense of oneness with each other. If you haven't viewed marital sex that way, turn your mind to that picture. Sex should be intimate. Two become one. From Parker, J.. *Intimacy Revealed: 52 Devotions to Enhance Sex in Marriage* (pp. 147-149). HHH Books. Kindle Edition.

I would add...

**We believe that the nature of sexual intimacy is to unite...and was designed for a united life (i.e. marriage.) I define it this way... “Sexual passion is the stimulating of a God-given longing to bond us with another; through the pleasure of releasing both personal and physical boundaries, leading to the uniting of one's body and being, designed as a part of a lifelong partnership.”**

I know that our current culture is deeply invested in selling the idea of “casual sex”...in which we separate the physical from the personal. We simply have to decide ... is it really a progressive idea... or a regressive idea? **Do I really believe that becoming like my dog is the fulfillment of my personhood?**

The simple truth is that **no little girl dreams of the day** they will find themselves in the **arms of a stranger**. No little boy dreams of the day they will be addicted and consumed by looking at a computer... or engaging in something rough and abusive. At our core, we were not designed for such separation of body and soul.

Restoration comes with realigning the longings of being and body... rediscovering what it means that we are human **beings** expressed in **bodies**.

2. Regarding greater sexual satisfaction in marriage...

From “Ten Important Research Findings On Marriage”

*By David Popenoe, Ph.D., The National Marriage Project, Rutgers University*

<http://www.foryourmarriage.org/ten-important-research-findings-on-marriage/>

People who are married are more likely to have emotionally and physically satisfying sex lives than single people or those who live together.

Contrary to the popular belief that married sex is boring and infrequent, married people report higher levels of sexual satisfaction than sexually active singles and cohabiting couples, according to the most comprehensive and recent survey of sexuality. Forty-two percent of wives said that they found sex emotionally and physically satisfying, compared to just 31% of single women

who had a sex partner. Forty-eight percent of husbands said sex was satisfying emotionally, compared to just 37% of cohabiting men. The higher level of commitment in marriage is probably the reason for the high level of reported sexual satisfaction. Marital commitment contributes to a greater sense of trust and security, less drug and alcohol-infused sex, and better communication between spouses.

3. For instance, one recent study out of Australia note that [men and women who were dissatisfied with their frequency of sex](#) were also more likely to express overall lower sexual and relationship satisfaction.

Meanwhile, sexual activity was a key factor in whether [couples remained satisfied with their marriages later in life](#), notes research published a *Journals of Gerontology* study.

Being sexually dissatisfied in your marriage is linked with several unpleasant "symptoms." A study published in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior* found that [spouses who weren't having as much sex as they desired](#) fought more, had more thoughts about ending their marriage, and less positive communications with their spouse. Their spouses *also* reported similar thoughts and negative feelings.

As sex-starved marriage is when one is yearning for more touch....more sex...and the other thinks, "It shouldn't matter"...no big deal....just sex. It really is a big deal...because it is about feeling wanted... loved...connected....masculine or feminine...and attractive. It often quenches connection broadly... resulting in spending time together.... sharing less together.

4. Among the challenges to a healthy desire for physical intimacy, there is..

Recover a Biblical view of sex.

Abuse victims often have trouble with sex in marriage because they associate it with painful memories. After sexual trauma, sex often seems dirty and repulsive. The victim needs to realize that God does not look at sex that way. Just as we need to get corrective lenses when our eyes are deceiving us, we need to let God's word correct our feelings about sex.

In the creation God "made them male and female" – Genesis 1:27 NIV. It was the holy and good God who thought up human anatomy and sexual attraction. "God saw all that he had made and it was very good" – Genesis 1:31 NIV. God commanded Adam and Eve to come together. They did so with his blessing – Genesis 1:28; 2:24.

God gave us sex as a beautiful gift. The scriptures celebrate the joy of sexual love within holy marriage – Proverbs 5; Song of Solomon; 1 Corinthians 5:2-5; Hebrews 13:4. If we associate sex with shame and abuse, it is only because of what the sinful world has done to it. God says sex is good. He does not want us to see it as bad. The abuse victim may

see this with the mind; it takes longer to convince his or her emotions. But this has to happen before there can be healing.

#### Freedom from Shame

There is Therefore Now No Condemnation. Satan hates this truth. Just think about the word redemption. Our self-condemnation serves no godly purpose. It is Satan's trick to keep us from freedom.

#### Freedom from anger

(May need to trust justice to God... Jeremiah 17:10 - "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve." There cannot be a complete transaction of forgiveness and reconciliation unless the abuser repents and asks your forgiveness. You should work toward that if possible – Matthew 18:15; Romans 12:18. But even if the person is not penitent, you can decide to stop resenting and leave it to God to deal with the person. "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord" – Romans 12:17-21 NIV. Even before people apologize, Jesus teaches us to have a spirit of forgiveness. On the cross Jesus prayed forgiveness for his murderers. Forgiveness does not mean you approve what the person has done.)

Again, a good reflection by J. Parker:

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor." — Isaiah 61:1-3

Some wives bear scars in the sexual arena. This is an area of special pain because it involves the most vulnerable parts of our bodies and our emotions. Perhaps you were molested, harshly punished for natural childhood curiosity, harassed, raped, verbally abused, cheated on, discarded. God sent His Son to "bind up the brokenhearted," to "comfort all who mourn," to turn your ashes to beauty, your mourning to joy, and your despair to praise. God can heal any wound. Yes, it may take time, but He is there to do the binding, to hold you close in comfort, and to lift you up into better plans for your future. Know that whatever those painful memories of sexual mistreatment, that is not what God had in mind by providing marriage with sexual intimacy. The misuse of sex is like taking a bat, beating someone with it, and then saying, "See, this is a baseball bat." You would know what a bat is, but you wouldn't have any idea what it was really

intended for. – From Parker, J.. Intimacy Revealed: 52 Devotions to Enhance Sex in Marriage (pp. 19-20). HHH Books. Kindle Edition.

5. Regarding the significance of rejecting the other's sexual desires...J. Parker notes:

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.” — Proverbs 12:13  
While much of Proverbs is instructive, some verses seem more observational. Like this one. It's an observed truth that when you hope for something and don't get it for a long time, your heart can feel sick. Just ask those who desperately need a job, yet remain unemployed; those who desire to be married, yet spend year after year single; or those who long for children, yet struggle with infertility. Now consider the longing of a higher-desire spouse who is rejected over and over. Whether it's your husband or you, a marked imbalance in sex drives can result in a sick heart. Oftentimes, a lower-desire spouse believes their rejection simply causes physical tension or hurt feelings. Instead, the rejected spouse likely aches far deeper, all the way down to their heart. Because, for them, making love both fosters and expresses love. Their hope is continually deferred, yet their longing doesn't cease. But when our deepest desires are met—with a new career, a loving husband, a precious infant, sexual union with the spouse we love—that longing fulfilled is a tree of life. It bears fruit again and again. – From: Parker, J.. Intimacy Revealed: 52 Devotions to Enhance Sex in Marriage (pp. 47-49). HHH Books. Kindle Edition.

6. Other translations of 1 Cor. 7 which capture the mutuality well...

1 Corinthians 7:3-4 (MSG)

The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality—the husband seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband... Marriage is a decision to serve the other

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 (NLT)

The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. <sup>4</sup> The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. <sup>5</sup> Do not deprive each other of sexual relations...

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 (NIV)

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you..."

6b. Giving, as well as receiving, has its benefits. Research out of the University of Toronto tracked desire in long-term couples and determined that the happiest pairs expressed "sexual communal desire," aka the [the desire to have sex for your partner's satisfaction](#) as opposed to just your own.



And the study author also concluded that when one partner gets the ball rolling for their spouse's benefit, they'll feel increased sexual desire themselves.

#### 7. Regarding the challenge of pornography,

Anti-pornography activist, Gail Dines, notes that young men who become addicted to porn “neglect their schoolwork, spend huge amounts of money they don’t have, become isolated from others, and often suffer depression.” ([Pornland](#), 93). Dr. William Struthers, who has a PhD in biopsychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago, confirms some of these and adds more, finding that men who use porn become controlling, highly introverted, depressed, dissociative, distractible, narcissistic, curious, and have high anxiety and low self-esteem ([Wired for Intimacy](#), 64-65). Ironically, while viewing porn creates momentary intensely pleasurable experiences, it ends up leading to several negative lingering psychological experiences.

As J. Parker notes,

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

Third parties of any kind meet the Bible’s definition of adultery. Jesus said that lusting after someone besides your spouse is adulterous (Matthew 5:27-30).

Healthy marital sex is focused on the interaction between husband and wife, and we must drive out anything that competes for that special moment with our spouse. Honor involves paying attention, being engaged, focusing on the item we honor—the marriage bed. Third parties and stray thoughts keep us from giving our marriage bed its due. Keep the marriage bed pure: certainly pure from adultery and also pure from distraction. (From: Parker, J.. *Intimacy Revealed: 52 Devotions to Enhance Sex in Marriage* (pp. 108-109). HHH Books. Kindle Edition.)

#### 8. Lauren F. Winner - Real Sex – The Naked Truth About Chastity, pp. 63-83, 97-100

9. There is something I hear having risen in the past decade... the idea of sexual compatibility ...and the idea that if there isn’t the type of sex you want...one should move on from such an inferior experience. That road will not end well. The truth is that there is very little sexual “need” that any couple can’t serve. The most fundamental needs can be met by those who care. It’s the caring...not compatibility... that is really an issue. Imagine what God provided.... The garden in which male and female are told to unite... with no instructions...no images...just the fun of figuring it out. That may give us a good sense of the freedom we should enjoy. It’s valuable to explore pleasure... but not to separate the real life relationship that it is a part of.