

SEXUALITY AND LOVE

LESSON 5: A BIBLICAL SEXUAL COMPASS IN TODAY'S CULTURE

Main Idea: The world is progressively embracing ideologies and behaviors that contradict a biblical worldview. God has given us His Word as a compass that points the way for a man to follow. In this lesson, you will discover how to maintain a biblical sexual compass in today's culture.



SIGHTLINE: Acquire Your Target

The current worldview seeks rational ways to solve the problems we face, apart from God. Romans 1:24-25 speaks to how people exchange truth for a lie in serving the creature rather than the Creator. However, Scripture has much good to say about what should happen sexually between a husband and wife.

Legally speaking, a husband and wife have rights with one another, including love, affection, sexual intercourse, companionship, comfort, and care. These are all implied by and to be expected in a marital relationship. To honor a spouse's right to the comfort and companionship (including sexual relations) of his/her spouse, some states even allow prisoners to have private, conjugal visits in a special room or apartment. But for a disciple of Christ, it's not ultimately the law that is the basis for what is good and right between married couples—it is Scripture.





CROSSHAIR: Focus on Your Target

Paul gives men a great foundation in 1 Corinthians 7:1-8 when he writes:

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. *The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights*, [NIV: “marital duty”; NKJV: “the affection due her”] and *likewise the wife to her husband*. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. *Do not deprive one another*, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; *but then come together again*, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. *Now as a concession, not a command*, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. (emphases added)

Sex and sexuality do not need help when kept within the boundaries set forth by God. How does this apply to marriage? One way is the frequency of sexual relationship depends on the couple. Generally, younger couples have sex more frequently than older couples. How often a couple has sex is not as important as having the right attitude toward giving affection to your spouse. If the couple agrees not to engage sexually, they are free to do so. However, Paul admonishes that spouses should not *deprive one another*. God encourages a couple to share their bodies with one another, in part to avoid the temptation to sexual sin.

In the above 1 Corinthians passage, Paul encourages fasting and prayer, presuming Christian husbands and wives will exert self-control in such times. It may even be that fasting, and prayer can indirectly improve your marital sex life, because of their ability to discipline the body and open the soul to receiving from God.

Now, if a married man does not have self-control, and his only goal in sex is to have fun, then the law of diminishing returns is activated. John Ortberg says, “Hedonism is the demand for more and more pleasure for personal



gratification. It always follows the law of diminishing returns, so that which produced joy in us yesterday no longer does today.”¹ As a disciple, you do not have to buy into the lie that the highest goal in sex is pleasure and fun; the lie that the only way to maintain passion is by variety; or the lie that sexual freedom means to do what you want when you want. If you buy into these lies, it will not be long before you have an insatiable sexual appetite caused by the law of diminishing returns.

The heart of sexual love is about loving your spouse not using them. Sex is about spiritual unity. If all sex means to you is having fun, you will be tempted to demand and expect better performance, higher frequency, and more excitement. Eventually, your pursuit of fun will demand more than your spouse is even capable of giving to you.

As a disciple you also need to set boundaries in your life to protect yourself and your marriage. Some wise boundaries include the following:

- making decisions together with your wife
- considering carefully what you tell your wife, so you do not put undue stress on her (Thoughtful consideration of your wife’s stress level needs to be balanced with maintaining emotional transparency with her.)
- choosing to live within your means
- guarding your marriage, closely
- protecting your marriage bed

1. John Ortberg, *The Life You’ve Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 72.





BULLSEYE: Zero in on Your Target

1. What are the legal aspects of what sexual union should be between a husband and wife?
 2. What does Paul mean when he says, “It is good not to have sexual relations?”
 3. How does the quote from John Ortberg apply in the context of sexual union?
- Take some time to listen to the Lord about what you just studied. How did this study help deepen your love for God?
 - As a result of your deepened love for God, how can you practically demonstrate the thought you experienced to your family and to others around you?



NEXT STEP

If you are single, go over them with a trusted mentor who can give you feedback and hold you accountable.

- Courage:** Write down a thought from this study that you experienced this week.

- Strength:** In the **Crosshair** section the idea of boundaries was given to help people protect themselves and their marriage. Take some time to write out five to eight boundaries you will set to protect yourself and your marriage. After you've come up with your boundaries, go over them with your spouse to glean her thoughts.

- Endurance:** Go over your boundaries with two or three men. What did you learn from them?

USING MY *FIREBIBLE*

Read the *FireBible* note, on 1 Corinthians 7:3.

- What does each partner surrender in the commitment of marriage?

- When are sensual desires acceptable?

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