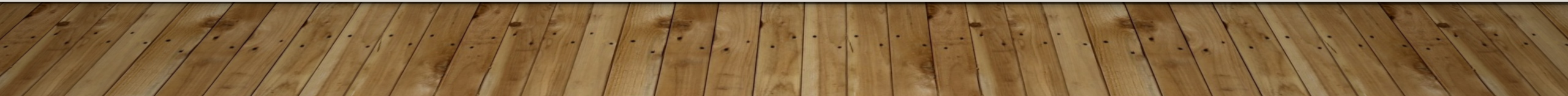


MARITAL INTIMACY TO THE GLORY OF GOD

SESSION 1



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

Question: what does the Bible teach about sex?

Question: what is the purpose of sex?

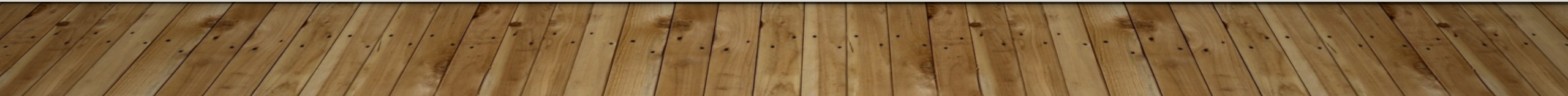
Question: is sex in marriage required?

Question: how often should a married couple have sex?

Question: are some sexual acts off limits for Christians?

Question: if sex is God's good creation why is it such a point of contention in our marriage?

Question: how do we resolve conflict about sex in our marriage?



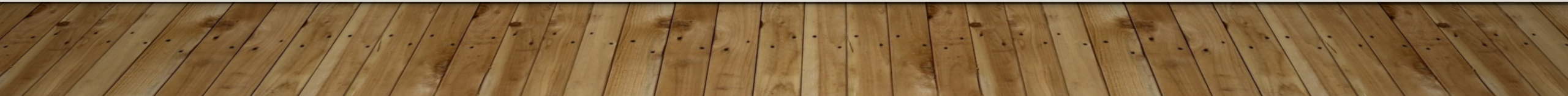
THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- The ultimate purpose of sex must necessarily conform with the reason for which God created all things.

Romans 11:36

- 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.
- According to this verse, sex was ultimately created to bring glory to God!

Question: does that statement strike you as odd or as uncomfortable?

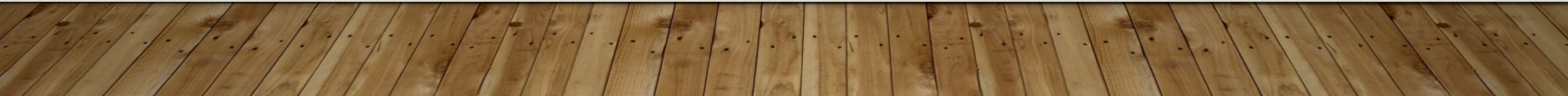


THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- If the thought that sex is something that can bring glory to God makes you feel strange or uncomfortable you are not alone!
- I think the reasons for that common reaction are numerous.

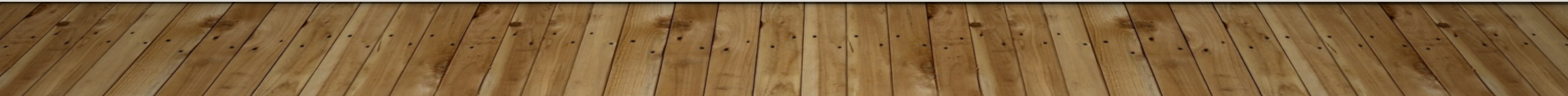
Reason 1: The fallen world around us is infatuated with sex.

- And that infatuation is not new.
- The secular culture in which the New Testament Church was founded was a highly sexualized culture in which sex was fundamentally connected with pagan idol worship.



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- So much so that Paul often had to address matters related to sex both negatively and positively.
 - But the fact that the world is infatuation with sex has unfortunately had an effect on each one of us!
 - The world's view of sex is all around us and the speed and velocity at which the world's view of sex is being presented to us is truly unprecedented.
- Because of the idolization of sex in our culture we can fall into one of two traps:
1. We allow our perspective and desire for sex to be shaped by the world.
 2. We begin to view sex itself as inherently dirty or even ungodly.

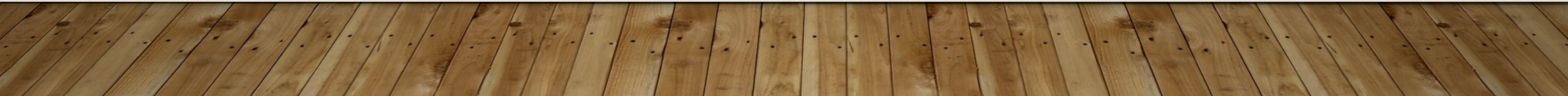


THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

Reason 2: Often Christians carry baggage from past sexual sin.

- Sexual sin has an affect on our attitude and perspective about sex, often in ways we don't even realize.
- Sexual sin of every kind is a perversion of what God created sex to be.
- You cannot indulge yourself in a perversion of God's created design and expect that you will remain unaffected!
- Sin has consequences!

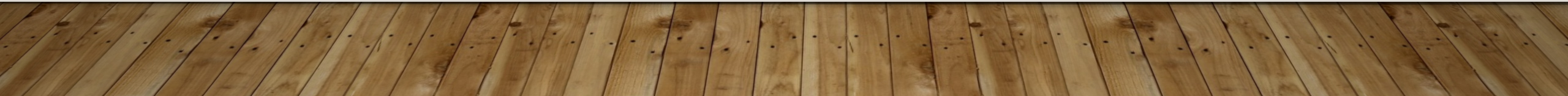
Good News: By God's grace, there is forgiveness and restoration from every kind of sexual sin!



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

Key: But you must come to understand that sexual sin is sinful not only in its outward acts but also in the internal heart sins and patterns of thought that led to those external acts!

- For example, a person may have been sexually promiscuous before salvation.
- After salvation they realize that sex outside of marriage is wrong and they commit from this point forward to abstain until marriage.
- But the problem is they may think that the only thing that was sinful about what they did was the fact that they weren't married.



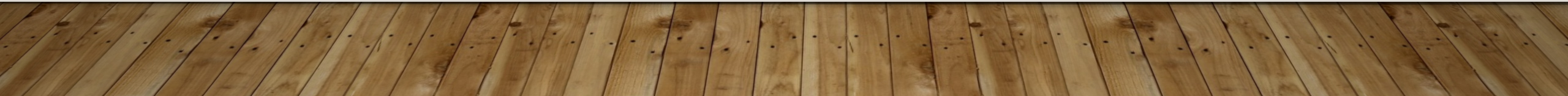
THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- So, they begin to dream of the day when they can do what they used to do in their past life of sexual sin only they insert their spouse where those other men or women used to be.
- Here is the problem with that!
- Sexual sin is fundamentally **self** serving!
- Sexual sin sells the lie that the primary, if not sole, purpose of sex is maximum personal physical pleasure!

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

Example: Two people who meet at a club and end up in bed together that evening don't do that because they so desperately want to give something to the other person!

- They do that because they want to get something from the other person!
- The same thing is true of sexual sins like pornography.
- Pornography is an extremely selfish sin!
- Looking at pornography trains you to think of sex as something designed and tailored to your personal preferences and desires!
- And nothing is asked of you in that process except to enjoy it!



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- The act of looking at pornography and the act of fornication are both inherently sinful in and of themselves.
- But what is often just as detrimental about these sins is that they train you to think about sex from a selfish perspective in which sex is all about you personally receiving the maximum amount of physical pleasure for the least amount of effort!
- Now truthfully people commit sexual sin for a host of different reasons.
- It may be a desire for an ecstatic physical experience, but it may also be about wanting to feel accepted, comforted, attractive, desirable, or any other number of motivations!
- But at the end of the day, they are all self serving!

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- **When we bring sexual sin into marriage then it affects us in the same two ways that we mentioned with reason 1.**
 1. We allow our perspective and desire for sex to be shaped by our past sexual sin.
 2. We allow our guilt or repulsion over past sexual sin to cause us to view sex itself as dirty and ungodly.

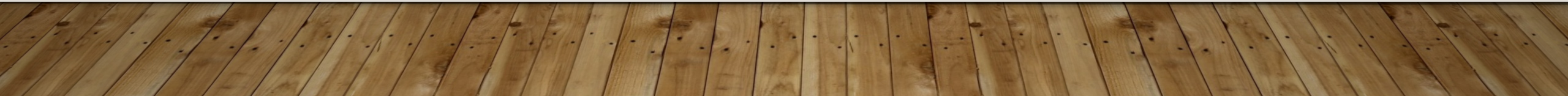
THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

Key: God's gift of sex in marriage is diametrically opposed to the selfish perspective of sex that has captivated the world!

- God has designed sex as means of selflessly expressing your love and appreciation for your spouse by using your body to maximize their pleasure for God's glory.
- It is true that there is much personal pleasure that comes to you in that process but that is not the primary goal!

Key: Biblical sex is an opportunity to live out selfless sacrificial love for your spouse!

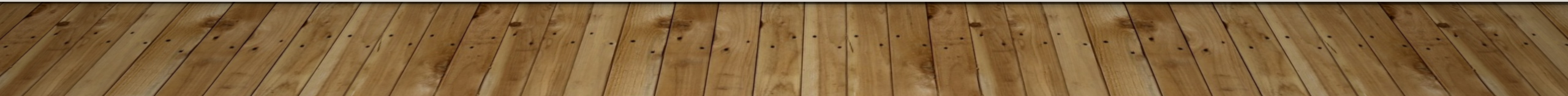
- THAT brings glory to God and THAT builds an unbreakable bond of oneness between a married couple that is a thing of beauty!



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

Key: So, when you think of the statement, “The ultimate purpose of sex is the glory of God”. Don’t picture the physical act of sex by itself.

- Instead, picture two people, clothed in the fruit of the Spirit, freely giving themselves to one another out of a genuine desire to love and serve the other person sacrificially!
- This is how God designed sex to be enjoyed in marriage!



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- That kind of selfless love and service of one another **does** produce physical pleasure and sex then becomes a gift that is mutually enjoyed!
- And God delights in that!
- It brings joy to the heart of God when His children enjoy the gifts He has created for them in the manner He created them to be enjoyed.

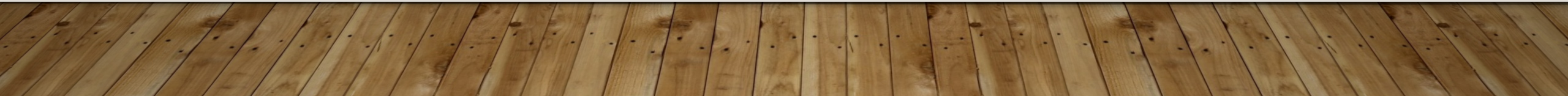
THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

Reason 3: The failure to apply the entire teaching of Scripture regarding marriage, Christian living, and sanctification to the marriage bed!

- It is very tempting to try and work on our sexual relationship in marriage in isolation from the other aspects of marriage and the Christian life.

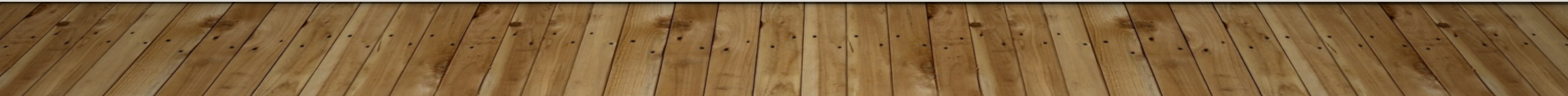
Key: Most of the time, sexual difficulties in marriage stem from other problems in the marital relationship.

- There are occasions when a person has a true medical condition that is causing physical problems related to the marriage bed.



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- But truthfully, most of the time sexual problems in marriage are a bi-product of conflict in the relationship and/or a failure to obey the other commands of Scripture regarding marriage, Christian character, and the pursuit of sanctification.
- Far and away the biggest culprit that causes problems in the marriage bed is...
- The idolatry of self!



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- Selfishness is a cancerous sin in our hearts that if left unchecked will produce other sinful fruits that are detrimental to our marital relationship as a whole, including the marriage bed.
- In our study we will discuss the common ways the idolatry harms the marriage bed.
- But for now, lets review a summary of what we have discussed so far through two key statements.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

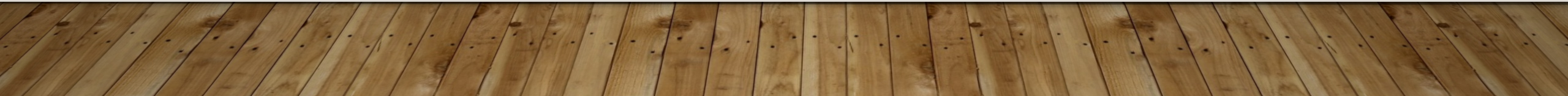
Key: The ultimate purpose of the marriage bed is the glory of God!

Key: The ultimate enemy of the marriage bed is the idol of self!

Philippians 2:3-4

3 Do nothing from ^aselfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.



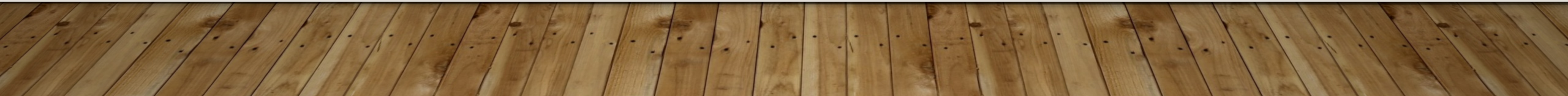
THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

Question: how do we train ourselves to see the glory of God as the purpose of sex?

Question: how do we dethrone the idol of self that so dramatically affects our marriage bed?

The Plan:

1. Review The Bible's Instruction Regarding Sex
2. Consider the marriage bed in light of the rest of Scriptures teaching on marriage, Christian character, and the pursuit of sanctification.
3. Answer other questions and concerns.



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

The Old Testament

Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18; 21-25

1. Sex is designed to be between one man and one woman joined together by the covenant of marriage.
2. Sex is designed to enable mankind to obey God's command to be fruitful and multiply.
3. Sex is the physical expression of the one flesh union.

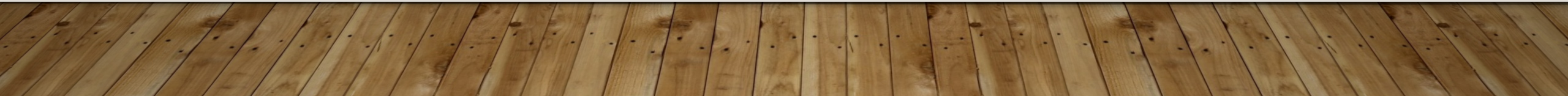
THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

The Old Testament

Proverbs 5:15-19; Song of Solomon 7:10-13

4. Wives and husbands are to flee from sexual sin and intentionally delight in one another.
5. Wives and husbands are to view sex as a good gift in which sexual pleasure is mutually desired, pursued, and enjoyed.
6. Though God purposefully designed sex to be physically pleasurable, it is ultimately to be a physical means of expressing our delight in our spouse not in sex as an end to itself!

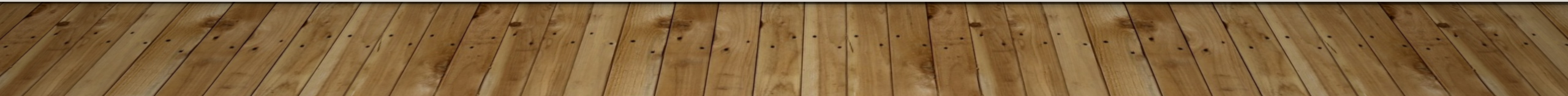
Question: does your pursuit of your spouse communicate “I delight in you!” or “I delight in sex?”



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- In light of these truths, we are to think of sex as the physical means by which we express and cultivate our one flesh union with our spouse.
- In that way sex becomes a physical way to express our love, appreciation, commitment, enjoyment, and delight in one another!
- And when we delight in the gift of married love through the unique means of sex it is right that we do so while giving thanks to God as the gracious giver of such a unifying gift!

Key: When we view sex in this way it brings glory to God because we are enjoying the gift He has given in the context and purpose for which He gave it!



THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

- Sex is not the ONLY way we express love to our spouse!
- Sex is an important way we express love to our spouse!
- Sex by itself is NOT the measure of marital health.
- A marriage without sex is a sure sign of an unhealthy marriage. (Barring medical disability)

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

The New Testament

Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

- Understand The Context
7. The marriage bed is pure and is not to be defiled by sexual sin
 8. The marriage bed is a protection against sexual temptation
 9. Sex in marriage is a mutual covenant commitment and duty

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT SEX

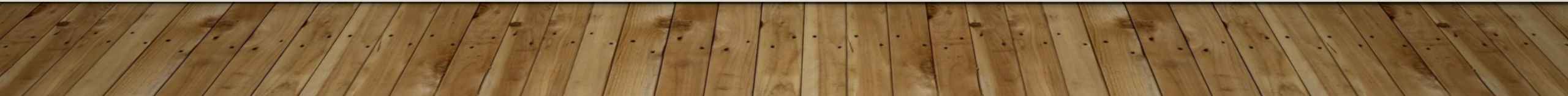
The New Testament

Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

10. In marriage we mutually commit to use our bodies for the sexual fulfillment and pleasure of our spouse

11. Marital sex is to be frequent and continual

12. A sexual break can be taken for a short time by mutual agreement for spiritual edification

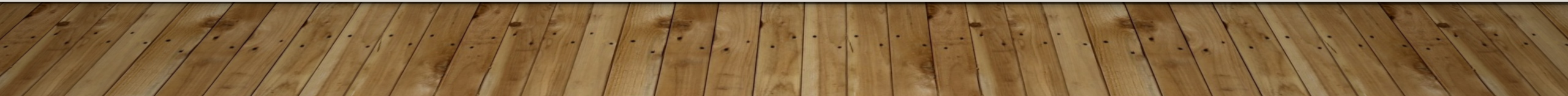


Q&A

- Got Questions?

BEFORE YOU GO

- Break up into couples:
 1. Commit to give genuine selfless effort in this area of your marriage.
 2. Commit to practicing Matthew 7 this week and remove the log from your eye in this area.
 3. Pray together for the following:
 - Thank God for the gift of marriage.
 - Pray for God to reveal any selfishness in your heart regarding the marriage bed.
 - Pray for God to help you both make His glory your highest aim for your marriage bed.



ASSIGNMENTS

- Use the Matthew 7 worksheet to analyze your own heart for selfishness and other heart sins in this area of your marriage.
- Ask yourself, “are there any ways in which my perspective about sex is out of step with what the Bible teaches?”
- Ask yourself and your spouse this question, “Are there any other areas of our relationship outside of the bedroom that are making our sexual relationship difficult?”

ASSIGNMENTS

- Survey your heart for selfishness in these two areas of the marriage bed:
 1. Quantity
 2. Quality
- Selfishness can manifest itself sexually in both your pursuit and lack thereof!
- Prioritize 15 minutes of intentional communication daily.
- Pick a time this week to have a connect meeting. (see website)
- Confess any sin that you find then ask for and extend forgiveness to one another.

ASSIGNMENTS

- If sex has been a particular point of tension between you:

Week 1 Goal:

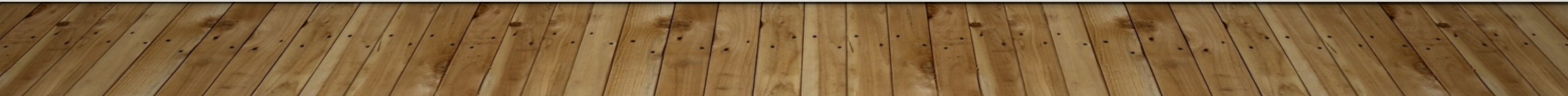
- The goal is to analyze your heart independently of your spouse's sin.
- Don't pressure one another to add anything to your marriage bed!
- The goal is to restore your relational oneness through conversation, repentance, forgiveness, and intentional time together.
- Talking comes before touching!

ASSIGNMENTS

- If sex has been a particular point of tension between you:

Week 2 Goal:

- If after week 1 things are still tense between you, continue applying the assignments for week 1 with patience and selflessness.
- If those conversations have brought about a renewal of closeness between you, then have a connect meeting this week to honestly and lovingly discuss your marriage bed.
- The goal is to both honestly share and humbly listen!



ASSIGNMENTS

- If sex has been a particular point of tension between you:

Week 2 Goal:

- Discuss Quantity and Quality.
- Share your personal preferences in these areas.
- When it comes to quality express the things you enjoy and also the things that you do not enjoy.
- Try to distinguish which things are simply not your preference and which things you find dirty, distasteful, or sinful against your conscience.

ASSIGNMENTS

- If sex has been a particular point of tension between you:

Week 2 Goal:

- Because the biblical goal of the marriage bed is to glorify God by fostering oneness through selflessly expressing love for our spouse, we should NEVER pressure our spouse to do anything that they find distasteful, dirty, or sinful.
- On the other side of the coin, applying the same principle, if there are things that your spouse finds pleasurable that aren't your preference but do not fall into the category of distasteful, dirty, or sinful, you should prayerfully consider how you can grow in loving your spouse selflessly in these ways overtime.

ASSIGNMENTS

- If sex has been a particular point of tension between you:

Week 2 Goal:

- Analyze your preferences against the Scriptures and ask yourself, “how does the Bible inform my preferences?”
- You may feel strongly positive that you should do something in your marriage bed, but have you checked your heart for selfishness?
- You may label something as dirty or distasteful but after reading Scripture you realize God does not agree.