

Preparation for Marriage Manual

Part 12 – Sex in Marriage

The Bible talks about four specific purposes for human sexual activity: procreation, recreation, communication and release.

We will now look into the Christian Bible to see what it tells us about each of these purposes.

Procreation

Genesis 1:27-28 [NIV] *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, **“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”**”*

Deuteronomy 7:11-14 [NIV] *“Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today. If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers. He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. **He will bless the fruit of your womb**, the crops of your land, your grain, new wine and oil, the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land that he swore to your forefathers to give you. You will be blessed more than any other people; **none of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young.**”*

What evidence do these verses give that sexual activity for reproduction of the human race is part of God’s plan for human beings?

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Psalms 127:3 [Living Bible] *“Children are a gift from God, they are His reward.”*

Psalms 139:13-15 [Living Bible] *“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body, and knit them together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvellous, and how well I know it. You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion.”*

What attitude towards sexuality and reproduction do you discover in these scriptures?

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Recreation and Release

Song of Solomon 4:10-12 [NIV] *“How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice! Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride; milk and honey are under your tongue. The fragrance of your garments is like that of Lebanon. You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain.”*

In comparing his bride to a locked up garden, Solomon was praising her virginity.

Virginity, considered old-fashioned by many in today’s culture, has always been God’s plan for unmarried people, and with good reason. **Sex without marriage is cheap. It cannot be compared with the joy of giving yourself completely to the one who is totally committed to you in the marriage covenant.**

Song of Solomon 4:15 [NIV] *“You are a garden fountain, a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon.”*

Solomon’s bride was as refreshing to him as a fountain of pure cool water in the heat of day-to-day stressful living. Could your partner say the same about you? Sometimes familiarity that comes with marriage causes us to forget the overwhelming feelings of love and refreshment we shared at the beginning of our marriage union.

Many marriages could benefit from a course of “refreshing”. Do you refresh your partner? Or are you a burden of complaints, sorrows and problems?

Partners in marriage should continually work at refreshing each other by an encouraging word, an unexpected gift, a change of pace, a surprise call or note, or even a withholding of a discussion of some problem until a proper time.

Your partner needs to be a haven of refreshment because the rest of the world usually is not.

Proverbs 5:18-19 [NIV] “*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.***”

God does not intend faithfulness in marriage to be boring, lifeless, pleasureless and dull. Sex is a gift God gives to married people for their natural enjoyment.

Real happiness comes when we decide to find pleasure in the relationship God has given or will give us and to commit ourselves to making it pleasurable for our married partner.

The real danger is in doubting that God knows what is best for us and really cares for us. We may then resent His timing for sexual pleasure and carelessly pursue it without His blessing.

Does it surprise or shock you that the Christian Bible actually encourages the enjoyment and sensual delights of sex when it is within the confines of the marriage relationship of a man and a woman?

What are your thoughts and comments?

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Communication

Genesis 2:24 [NIV] *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”*

The “one flesh” spoken of in this verse means ideally a **blending of the body, mind and spirit, our entire being with our partner.**

Genesis 2:18 [NIV] *“The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”*

God gave marriage as a gift to humanity. Adam and Eve were created to complete one another, together in God’s eyes they are the one being each complementing the other, in the marriage union.

Mark 10:6-9 [NIV] *“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female’. this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”*

1 Corinthians 6:16 [NIV] *“Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”*

God gave marriage not just for convenience, nor was it brought about by any culture.

Marriage was instituted by God and has three basic aspects:

- 1 The man and woman leave their parents and in a public act promise themselves to each other exclusively.
- 2 The man and woman are joined together by taking responsibility for each other’s welfare, by loving their partner above all others.

This welfare goes beyond the physical into the eternal spiritual realm.

The Christian Bible shows very clearly the physical marriage as being the ideal training ground for an eternal spiritual relationship with the Creator God, Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:22-33 [NIV] *“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as **Christ is the head of the church**, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, **just as Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, **just as Christ does the church**, for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” **This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church.** However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”*

The marriage relationship is one that is Holy, a living symbol of something that is eternal and a precious union that needs tender, self-sacrificing love, and care. **Marriage is a reflection of the**

relationship that Jesus Christ has for the Christian Church who will become His eternal bride at His return [see **Revelation 19:6-9**].

3 The man and woman become one flesh in the intimacy and commitment of a sexual union that is reserved for marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 [NIV] *“The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. 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. 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 because of your lack of self-control.”*

Strong marriages include all three of these aspects.

Genesis 2:25 [NIV] *“The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”*

Adam and Eve were **not** embarrassed by their nakedness in their innocence before sin entered their lives prompted by Satan.

Genesis 3:7 [NIV] *“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”*

After Adam and Eve sinned, they experienced a guilty conscience, the built-in warning sign placed by God in the human spirit that we have done wrong.

Their eyes were opened and for the first time they feel guilty and embarrassed because of their nakedness.

What did they do?

They put on fig leaves as barriers to cover their sexuality that God had blessed.

We often put on fig leaves, create barriers in our intimate marriage relationship. There are certain areas of our life we would rather that our partner did **not** know about, therefore we are **not** open and naked mentally before them.

In marriage, a lack of spiritual, emotional and intellectual intimacy usually precedes a breakdown of physical intimacy and communication.

In the same way, when we fail to expose our secret thoughts to God, we break down our lines of communication to Him.

In the plan of God for human beings, sex between a man and woman in marriage was intended to provide a means of totally revealing ourselves to our partner.

The pouring out of our deepest affection, hopes and dreams into the one we love.

Sex becomes a means of saying “*I love you*” in short a means of intimate communication.

How do everyday experiences affect sexual closeness and communication?

How can they affect a husband’s or wife’s ability to give of themselves to their partner?

Answer the following questions that will help you to bond with your partner, through a clearer vision of their feelings.

1 What was the first question about sex that you can remember asking your parents? How did they respond?

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2 From what source (parents, friends, books) did you first learn the basic facts (or rumours) about reproduction? Can you remember anything about how you felt when you received this information?

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3 When you were growing up did you have anyone with whom you felt comfortable when talking about your questions concerning sex? Who was it? What made that person easy to talk with?

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4 What does the word sex mean to you?

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5 In your future marriage sex will mean?

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6 Do you agree or disagree that men are "girl watchers" and that normally women are **not** "man watchers" ?

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7 How will you respond and deal with a situation after you are married, when another person is attracted to you and approaches you for sex?

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8 What if you, after marriage, find yourself sexually attracted to another person?

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9 How important is sex in a Christian couple's marriage?

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10 What difference would being a Christian make in a couple's sexual relationship in marriage?

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Discuss how you and your future partner replied to these questions and record any revision of attitudes towards sex in marriage each of you need to address.

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Future Wife

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Please now read this prayer to God written by Harry Hollis Jr. in his book *'Thank God For Sex'*.

Lord it's hard to know what sex really is. Is it some demon put here to torment me? Or is it some delicious seducer from reality? It is neither of these Lord.

I do know what sex is:-

It is body and spirit, it is passion and tenderness, it is strong embrace and gentle hand-holding, it is open nakedness and hidden mystery, it is joyful tears on honeymoon faces and it is tears on wrinkled faces at a golden wedding anniversary.

Sex is a quiet look across a crowded room, a love note on a pillow, a rose laid on a breakfast plate, and laughing together in the night.

Sex is life, not all of life but wrapped up in the meaning of life.

Sex is your good gift O God to enrich life, to continue the human race, to communicate, to show me who I am, to reveal my mate, to cleanse through being *"one flesh"*.

Lord, some people say that sex and religion don't mix, but your Word says sex is good.

Help me to keep it good in my life. Help me to be open about sex and still protect its mystery. Help me to see that sex is neither demon or deity.

Help me **not** to climb into a fantasy world of imaginary sexual partners, but keep me in the real world and to love the people you have created.

It's hard for many people to say *"Thank God for sex"* because for them sex is more a problem than a gift, they need to know that sex and the gospel message can be linked together, they need to hear the Good News about sex, show me how I can help them.

Thank you, Lord, for making me a sexual being. Thank you for showing me how to treat others with trust and love.

Thank you for letting me talk to you about sex.

Thank you that I feel free to say *"Thank you God for sex!"*

My thoughts on what I have just read:-

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Outcome of the discussion on our personal thoughts:

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After the marriage ceremony the first few sexual encounters should be unrushed times of each partner carefully finding out through open discussion what is physically pleasurable **for their partner** and what is difficult for them to accept as part of their sexual union.

Both partners need to be fully relaxed in what is happening of a sexual nature to them.

Spend plenty of time exploring each other's bodies in a pleasurable way before you become "*one flesh*" by the husband's penetration of his wife's body.

After coupling the pleasurable fondling and cuddling should continue with plenty of endearing words and comments from both partners.

Any changes in sexual encounters must be discussed and accepted by both partners and rejected after the first try if either partner finds it difficult to accept.

Your joy in sex is the result of making sex a pleasurable and joyful experience **for your partner**.

Never enter into any sexual act with a selfish attitude or motivation.