

# Christian Sexuality

Grace and Truth – part \_\_\_\_\_

This week we'll look at God's design for sex and why it is important to a marriage.

## **DAY 1: God's design for marriage and sex**

1. *Secular* marriage begins on the **basis** of romantic and sexual love. As long as the feelings of love and the sexual relationship is happening, marriage continues. But when romantic love and/or sexual love fades, the very foundation of the marriage may virtually disappear.
2. You will hear the once loving couple say things like, "We love each other as friends, and as co-parents, and we love each other as people." What you are left with is, "Isn't this too bad. Marital love *just ran out*" as if this was just inevitable.
3. What secular people rarely connect is the end result of a dying marriage with their assumptions about marriage. Look back at statement #1.
4. Is romantic love and sexual love the foundation for marriage? Can you build a growing marriage over many years that grows in strength and beauty, on the foundation of romantic and sexual love? Or, is more needed? A lot more?
5. The bible indicates that what is needed is:
  - a. A very different foundation for marriage, and
  - b. A very different kind of love to grow a marriage!
6. Marriage is not man's idea but God's idea. God's design for sex and for marriage is meant to lead us into deeper marital connection as the years grow.
  
7. We will have virtually no understanding of the meaning and design of sex apart from marriage. Why is sex meant for only one other person, in marriage? Besides the power to procreate children and the obvious physical fulfillment of sex, what is the meaning of sex? Why does complementary gender (male/female) matter?
8. Sex within the confines of marriage is something that is shared with only one other person. You don't do this with anyone else.
  - a. Sex symbolizes what is supposed to happen in marriage. We both stand naked, stripped before each other, to experience acceptance, pleasure, the deepest closeness reserved only for us.
  - b. Sex is meant to
    - (1) Deepen our love for each other,
    - (2) Deepen our commitment to each other,
    - (3) Remind us of our vows.
    - (4) Display and give a unique male other-centeredness, as well as a unique female other-centeredness if it is to be fully enjoyed.
9. In other words, sex is meant to illustrate the design for marriage.
10. What strikes you from today's writing?

## DAY 2: Why is abstinence important? Building holiness and self-control

The foundation for each marriage begins in dating.

*1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you **abstain** from unchastity; that each of you know how to take a wife for himself in **holiness and honor**, not in the passions of lust like the pagans who do not know God; and that no man transgress or wrong his brother or sister, for the Lord is an avenger in all these things as we solemnly forewarned you.*

*For God did not call us to lust but to **holiness**. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards, not man, but God, who gives you His Holy Spirit.*

1. The before marriage relationship is meant and designed to be free of sex. Abstinence. That sounds crazy to the secular world.
2. Why is abstinence important? Notice Paul's phrase, "taking a wife" means what we used to call courtship. Now we call it dating and engagement.
3. Before we begin a marriage relationship, we are building a foundation upon which a marriage can more easily be built.
4. Paul identifies two vital characteristics that are supposed to be built during dating and engagement: **holiness** and **honor**. There is an immediate contrast with our secular dating which is mostly built on infatuation and sex. These two foundations are as different, like trying build a home on a concrete slab or just a dirt pad.

### 5. **Holiness:** grows in the seedbed of abstinence

- a. After you get married you may be surprised that you are attracted to someone who is not your spouse. That comes as a shock. If that happens at work, you may find yourself attracted to someone you see five days/week, for 40-50 hours/week. That person may be dressed every day to the nines, puts on their best behavior, and appears charming. You may be involved in projects together, meetings together, etc. If the desires of attraction for that person run high, how are you to think about that?
- b. If your marriage is built on a dirt foundation of romantic love, infatuation, and the feelings of love, you are going to find yourself in quite a turmoil. You may also find your own feelings for your spouse to be dwindling, and the temptations to cheat on your spouse to be overwhelming.
- c. But instead, if you have sought abstinence in the pursuit of holiness, you will find yourself forced to learn and develop a vital character quality—**self-control**. The bible calls this holiness. You are learning the value of delayed gratification. You will find this as an essential tool in marriage.
- d. In today's secular dating, sex is one of the first things couples "in love" do. That requires no holiness and no self-control. But what happens when you discover, after you're married that holiness and self-control is now required to keep marital love from waning and from you committing adultery?

We'll continue this topic tomorrow...

6. What strikes you from today's writing?

### **DAY 3: Why is abstinence important? Building holiness and self-control (Continued)**

1. Yesterday, we began to look at why holiness needed to be developed during dating through abstinence. We continue that today.

2. Married couples often fight and complain about very different sexual drives. So often, the woman's sex drive diminishes in comparison with the husband's. Why is that? There are multiple reasons for this.

3. A woman loses interest in sex when she feels used by her husband. All too often, what is needed is a man's self-control during the first few minutes of love-making. Instead, if a man just does "what comes naturally" to him, he will be quickly done, leaving his wife very unfulfilled and often feeling used. When a wife feels used, her interest in sex will dissipate.

4. While a man needs to exercise self-control, he also needs to be tender with his wife. Sex is much more personal to a woman, while sex is much more physical to the man.

Where does a man learn that kind of self-control?

During dating and engagement!

5. It's like a high school freshman that wants to play varsity football. The freshman is fast and a quick learner. He excels on the frosh-soph. team due to his speed. At the JV team, his speed keeps him on the team, but he isn't starting anymore. At the beginning of his senior year he finds out he did not make varsity, in spite of three years of HS football. Why didn't he make the team? He never believed he need *weight training*. Other guys could bench press 200 pounds, but with his speed why would he need to bench press more than 100 pounds? He pleads with the coach to let him play varsity football. He promises to be in the weight room every day, but the how long will it take to go from benching 100 to 200 pounds? A loooooong time.

6. Self-control doesn't just appear out of nowhere just because you want it to. You have to go to the "gym," exercising self-control, building up your self-control muscles. The "gym" is daily trips to abstinence.

7. If you are already married and now realize you avoided the "gym" of abstinence, you still need to go to the "gym" of self-control! You can do this in bedroom, with your spending, your eating habits, your temper, your words, etc.

8. What strikes you from today's writing?

#### **DAY 4: Building holiness and trust!**

1. Couples who have avoided the gym of abstinence discover another major marriage-building component that has not been built—TRUST.

2. A friend of mine confided in me years ago, that his wife asked about when he was going to be home, every day. If he said 6:00 p.m., and he wasn't home by 6:15, she would call, asking why he wasn't home yet. This became a daily annoyance for them both. That turned to anger.

3. His complaint to her was, "Don't you trust me? You should trust me. I married you."

4. My friend did not understand two things about trust.

a. First, she did **not** trust him. Why? She knew exactly how much holiness and self-control he had, which was virtually none. How did she know that? He had demonstrated that during their dating, from Date #1. No abstinence, no self-control exhibited.

--He was the senior football player who could only bench press 100 pounds, and needed to be able to bench press 200 pounds. He wanted to be trusted but had developed no "trust muscles."

b. Second, trust is not something that is given. Trust is something that has to be built.

--Trust is like money. If my wife asks me how much we have in our checking account and I tell her \$5,000, but the bank calls her with a bounced check alert, who is she going to believe? The bank or me?

--I only have in my checking account what I have deposited. Likewise, we only have in our "trust" account only the amount of self-control we have deposited.

5. But the trust we build through the months of abstinence carries over into *every* area of life. You can trust each other with money and spending, you can trust each other's motives and intentions, you can trust each other when away on business trips, etc.

6. What strikes you from today's writing?

## **DAY 5: Building Honor: other-centered love, credibility, teamwork, oneness, etc.**

*1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from unchastity; that each of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passions of lust like the pagans who do not know God; and that no man transgress or wrong his brother or sister, for the Lord is an avenger in all these things as we solemnly forewarned you.*

### **Honor:**

1. We will now look at the second great goal of dating and engagement: building honor.
2. Honor is built through abstinence.
3. From the bible's point of view, keeping sex for marriage, for your wedding night, is a gift that is made precious and beautiful through abstinence.
4. Honor is built by being intent on giving the most precious and unique gift one spouse can give another, at great cost to self.
5. We honor one another by not stealing from one another by gratifying our immediate desires.
6. We honor one another by looking to building a marriage built on honoring each other.

### **Lust:**

7. The alternative, which is "like the pagans" do is the way of "the passions of lust." Lust, in any form, is the raw desire of taking that which is not mine to take. Lust has a number of consequences.
8. Many women complain that men won't commit to them and to marriage. There are a number of reasons for this, but a major reason occurs when lust is "fulfilled" (shacking up, no abstinence, sexual gratification, etc.). The need to commit to a woman is significantly weakened. When a man receives the benefits of marriage without the commitment of marriage, there is far less motivation for a man to commit to her.
9. A young woman may believe that she will get a marriage commitment from him through pre-marital sex, but she makes it more likely that he will drag his feet for a long time, or eventually find someone else.

### **The many benefits of honor**

10. Honor her body, yes. You are to build up your honor muscles in the gym of abstinence. Why? You will discover that you will be developing honor muscles, not just in the sexual arena, but across the board in lots of applications!!!
11. For example, you are discussing where you're going to take your one-week vacation. She wants to go to the beach. You want to go to the mountains. When honor is not built during dating and engagement, you will find yourself lobbying for your preferred destination and she will lobby for her preferred destination. You may even find yourselves arguing like attorneys in a court of law.
12. But what happens with a cement foundation built on honor? At the first moment you realize you both disagree, someone says, "Tell me why you'd like to go to the beach for vacation. What is about the beach that would mean something to you?" Upon hearing her reasons, your follow-up question might be, "What are the most important things to you about our vacation?" Why do

you start with her instead of you? You've developed the value of HONOR. Your honor muscles are telling you to honor her opinions, honor her thoughts, honor her emotions even if you don't agree with her opinions or thoughts, or even when you don't understand her emotions.

13. If she has developed her HONOR muscles, she will reciprocate, listening patiently to you, seeking to understand you. HONOR then means you are both leaning toward the other to come up with something that would benefit you both.

14. This is repeated whenever budget changes are needed, when big purchases are needed, when trying to team up in parenting, household chores, differences of opinion regarding in-laws, and when things like misunderstandings, miscommunications, and conflict occur. Your bent is to honor your spouse, not blame your spouse.

Consider these likely outcomes from either abstinence or lust as your foundation:

a. Honor muscles give the benefit of the doubt to your spouse.

Lust muscles give the benefit of the doubt to you.

b. Honor muscles seek to please your spouse first, then you.

Lust muscles seek to please you first, then your spouse.

c. Honor muscles see the insanity of holding a grudge with your spouse.

Lust muscles see the justification for holding a grudge with your spouse.

d. Honor muscles find ways to serve your spouse.

Lust muscles find ways your spouse isn't serving you.

e. Honor muscles see a "marital scorecard" as repulsive.

Lust muscles see a "marital scorecard" as justified.

15. What strikes you from today's writing?