



VERTICAL MARRIAGE

Sex

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INTRODUCTION

To say that we live in a sex-crazed culture is a massive understatement. You can hardly turn on the TV without some sort of sexual message being sent either in the programming or the advertising. Today's pop-music is filled with sexual imagery, if not brash and unashamed lyrics about sexuality. It seems everyone believes strongly in the philosophy that says sex sells.

This has effected many down to the core of how they identify themselves. To the LGBT movement, nothing is as important as how you identify yourself on a sexual level. And this, in their mind, drives their agenda and attempts to force others to raise sexuality to the same level of importance.

There is little doubt that we live in a sex-crazed culture. To our world, sex is god.

If you look at the church over the past several decades, how have we dealt with this topic? We have dealt with it largely with silence. When we actually talk about it, it's always in the negative: "Sex before marriage is wrong. It's dirty!" or "Homosexuality is sin! Dirty, dirty, dirty!" Although we don't take the world's stance and treat sex as a god, we have communicated a different, and wrong view that sex is gross.

Is there a balanced view of sex? Yes. A balanced view is really the Biblical view. The Bible puts sex in its right place. It is certainly not to be worshipped, but it's also not a topic that should be avoided. The Bible talks about sex and in positive and beautiful ways.

- What has been your experience in church? Have you ever been taught a biblical view of sex?

🗒 Do you tend to think about sex as dirty?

🗒 Do you tend to think about sex too much?

A good summary statement for the biblical view of sex is:
"Sex is a gift to be opened only in the confines of a heterosexual marriage."

Though we will spend a lot of time unpacking Scripture to help you understand this better, here are a few verses to consider.

READ Hebrews 13:4.

🗒 What does this verse teach about sex?

READ Romans 1:26-27.

🗒 What are some words that God uses to describe woman with woman and man with man (homosexual) relationships?

🗒 How would you summarize God's view of homosexuality?

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PRINCIPLES DRIVING THE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITHIN MARRIAGE

One of the most extensive passages on the sexual relationship of a husband and wife is found in 1 Corinthians 7. There are several principles we can gather from this text. But first, let's get an overview of the text.

READ 1 Corinthians 7:1-7.

- ① What are the main points of this text?

- ① What implications should that have on your sexual relationship in marriage?

Let's dive in deeper and see some principles we can apply.

1. SINGLENESS IS AN OK OPTION.

READ 1 Corinthians 7:1.

Apparently, the church in Corinth had written a letter to Paul asking him some questions and now Paul is going to answer them. We don't know the questions, but one of them must have been about sexual relationships. Paul's answer in verse 1 can be confusing. Is Paul saying that remaining single and abstaining from sexual relations is good and therefore by implication stating that getting married and having sexual relations is bad?

READ Genesis 2:18.

🗒️ What does this text say about a husband and wife?

READ Hebrews 13:4.

🗒️ What word is used to describe the marriage bed?

Considering the Bible as a whole, you cannot come to the conclusion that getting married and having sexual relations is bad. In fact it's called honorable. So what is Paul saying? Paul is making the point to say that if someone can remain sexually pure, then singleness is an OK option. Paul comes back to this in verses 6 and 7. READ vs. 6-7.

The point is not "sex is bad" but rather, "singleness is OK as well."

But the big caveat is that you must remain sexually pure in your singleness!

This leads us to another important principle.

2. A PROPER SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP IN MARRIAGE WILL KEEP YOU FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY.

READ verse 2. Here, Paul says that there is temptation to sexual sin. Unless you have a special gift from God (vs. 7), you need special help to remain sexually pure. Therefore, God has given a wife to a man and a man to a wife as the appropriate help.

Any sex outside of a heterosexual marriage is sexual immorality. And though all sin is sin, this one is unique in that it is a sin against your own body. God purchased your body with the high price of His Son on the cross. Therefore, we should want to use our body to glorify God.

3. SEX SHOULD BE FREELY GIVEN AND NOT WITHHELD.

READ vs 3-5

Paul uses some strong language here. But the principle is clear. We are to freely give of ourselves to our spouse and we are not to hold back.

This is a tough teaching for many, and especially many women. Some might say – “I don’t like this topic reduced to this level...I want to talk about romance, I want to talk about problem solving, I refuse to think about sexual relations from the perspective of duty.”

However, at the end of the day the question isn’t, “What do I want to hear?” but, “What does the Bible say?” It’s explicitly clear in this passage. Sex is not to be withheld.

- ① What are some reasons why one might withhold sex from his/her spouse?

- ① What does the cross of Jesus Christ model for us in terms of self-focus?

The reality is that, most often, men are more sexual creatures than women. And since we are living in such a sex-crazed society, men are faced with temptations multiple times a day. His wife is the only righteous outlet for his sexual desire. Therefore, this relationship needs to be healthy.

🔪 What are your thoughts on this?

4. IF THERE IS A SEASON OF ABSTINENCE, IT SHOULD BE MUTUALLY AGREED UPON, FOR LIMITED TIME AND FOR A GOOD REASON.

Again, this principle comes straight from God's Word.

READ vs. 5.

It's interesting that Paul allows for a time of abstinence, but only under very specific guidelines. Mutually agreed upon, for a limited time, and for a good reason.

In this case, the reason was prayer. But even then, he adds, "but then come together again."

🔪 What are some other legitimate reasons for abstinence?

🔪 How might a couple work through this issue?

In addition to the principles from 1 Corinthians 7, there are a couple of other verses to consider.

READ 1 Peter 3:7.

- ① How is a husband to dwell with his wife?

- ① How might this impact the sexual relationship?

- ① How is a husband to honor his wife?

- ① How might this impact the sexual relationship?

READ Ephesians 5:25.

- ① What does this text say about how a husband should treat his wife?

- ① How might this impact the sexual relationship?

Husbands are to be loving and understanding of their wives. Therefore, sex should never be demanded and certainly never forced. A husband should not ask his wife to perform any sexual practices she is uncomfortable with, as that would not be treating her as the weaker vessel. He should be gentle, compassionate, understanding and, above all, loving.

READ Ephesians 5:22

✎ How is a wife to treat her husband?

✎ How might this impact the sexual relationship?

Wives should be respectful and understanding of their husbands. Since the clear biblical command is to never withhold sex, a wife should be careful about refusing her husband in this manner.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

Due to past sexual sins, either that you have committed or that others have done to you, this area may be very, very difficult for some. You may need to undergo special counseling to help you work through these struggles. We are here to love and help you if the need arises.

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PRACTICES GUIDING THE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP IN MARRIAGE

Based on these principles, here are some practices that should be in place.

1. HAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SEX.

This may be uncomfortable for some, but it's an important practice.

You need to discuss:

- Frequency- How often should we have sex. (HINT: Somewhere between the extremes of twice a day and once a month).
- Methods-There are lots of ways to enjoy this relationship and lots of options. Nothing in the marriage bed involving a husband and wife (alone) is biblically off limits. However, a husband or wife should not be asked to do something they are uncomfortable with. Waiting until the heat of the moment to make these decisions is a bad idea! Ideally, it is best to have a discussion before-hand about desires, likes, and dislikes. Create clear boundaries.

Pray about this together! Again, this may feel awkward. But remember, God blesses sex in marriage. This is His design. Ask for His help if you need to.

2. NEVER WITHHOLD SEX AS A PUNISHMENT.

We've already worked through the sin of withholding sex, but this is a temptation that many face. This distorts the act. Sex was never intended to be a weapon. It's a gift. Be careful of this temptation.

3. DON'T SEE SEX AS 50%/50%, BUT AS 100%/100%

The reality is, when sex is 100/100, it is a wonderful and beautiful thing. When a husband's main focus is to love his wife and please her sexually, and the wife's goal is the same for her husband, this becomes a wonderful, tender, and pleasurable part of married life.

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