

When Sinners Say “I Do”

Lesson 10

1. The culture of Corinth was obsessed with SEX:

- The Greek world used an expression (*corinthiazesthai* – “to play the Corinthian”) to describe someone who was given to every form of sexual expression.
- Corinth was home to the worship of Aphrodite and her 1,000 temple prostitutes.
- Trade and exploding population made Corinth the epicenter of pornography, brothels, orgies, divorce on demand, sexual abuse, sexual disease and public lewdness.

What forms of sexual pressure do husbands and wives experience in our time? How are we trained or taught to respond to these pressures?

2. Paul deals with the opposite extremes in response to the culture:

- **6:12** – “*All things are lawful for me.*” ... sexual experiences outside the marriage covenant violate the unity of the believer to Christ and violates the picture of unity in marriage.
 - a. Popular slogan of that time: “Sex for the body and the body for sex.”
 - b. Paul definitively marks a difference between the fate of the body and the person: sexual relationships affect not only the body but the whole person, and the person would not share the same fate as the mortal body.
 - c. Paul is clear that the body and soul are inextricably linked, meaning that bodily actions are never morally or religiously neutral.
- **7:1** – “*It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*” ... asceticism is unnatural and can only be accomplished through the power and strength of God’s grace.
 - a. The sentence “It is good ...” was a contention of the Corinthian believers, not a statement from Paul (although later he says that singleness is “good” – vs. 8)
 - b. “Touch a woman” was the Jewish way of describing sexual activity (Gen. 20:6, Ruth 2:9, Prov. 6:29) ... much the same as our “making love”.
 - c. Paul was not prudish nor was he libertarian in his views of sexuality – sex, like a fire, can burn as hot as you want within the confines of a marriage covenant.
 - d. ***ILLUS*** – **Roger Staubach**: “*I enjoy sex as much as Joe Namath, only I do it with one girl.*” (1975 interview with Phyllis George)

3. How God desires sexual activity in marriage to function:

- Adventure in Devotion – this does not mean a mindless, dutiful, my-spouse-is-really-needy- so-I-guess-I’d-better-deliver mentality!
 1. **Devotion to Protection** (vs. 2) – sexual activity within marriage is meant to be a God-installed defense against temptation. (See also vv. 5, 8-9)
 - a. The tempting of husbands and wives abounds: close relationships at work, entertainment choices, obsessions with celebrities and sports figures, news stories on sexual crimes and sexual exploits, advertising, etc.
 - b. How can married Christians protect themselves from the onslaught?

- c. Our spouse is the first line of defense – we serve our spouse by maintaining a regular and satisfying intimate relationship.

What is your first reaction to thinking of intimacy in marriage as a means of protecting your spouse from sexual sin and lust?

- d. In our culture, sexuality is promoted as a means of self-fulfillment and pleasuring yourself; God intends for intimacy in marriage to be a means of loving and serving one another.

2. **Devotion to Possession** (vs. 3-4) – husbands and wives are owned by one another.

“Marriage means that our bodies are now claimed by God for the pleasure and service of another.” (pg. 157) Agree or disagree?

- a. This is a remarkable picture of the actual scope of “two shall become one flesh.”
- b. How are married couples to fulfill this instruction?
- c. Gal. 5:13 – in love we serve one another!

What kind of issues does this kind of expectation bring up? What would prevent a husband or wife from allowing their spouse such authority? (past abuse, sexual exploitation, frequency of demands, etc.)

• **Adventure of Delight** – God intends for OUR greatest joy in marriage to come from being a primary source of joy TO OUR SPOUSE.

1. Thriving, satisfying marital intimacy is a key expression of this fact – our joy in sex should be almost indistinguishable from the joy our spouse receives when we are intimate.
2. “Deprive” (vs. 5) has the meaning of “defraud, withholding someone’s rightful possession” (See 1 Cor. 6:7-8) – since we are not our own, our spouse has conjugal rights.
3. It is possible that the defrauding was the result of an over-reaction to the culture or to the Corinthian believer’s (See 6:9-11) past sexual promiscuity.
4. Demanding those rights is not the emphasis or the thinking of Paul (in fact, demanding our rights is not love at all, but an expression of selfishness!).
5. Paul implies that marital intimacy is expected to be regular, only broken by mutual agreement to pursue a greater intimacy with God.

Practically speaking, what hinders regular marital intimacy? How do we deprive our spouse of what is rightfully theirs in this area? (fatigue, work schedule, care of children, physical changes, unresolved conflict, bitterness, fear)

Prov. 5:15-23 – the father tells his son to “rejoice (extreme outbursts of happiness) with the wife of your youth” and “always be enraptured (intoxicated) with her love” ... Who is responsible to initiate marital intimacy?

How does a couple “keep the fire burning” as age takes its toll on the body?

6. *“Biblical sex, with its joyful service and the matchless intimacy born from it, is a glorious expression of what we are intended to be – male and female, created in God’s image to enjoy intimacy of relationship in its deepest possible expression.”* (pg. 160)

- Adventure of Dependence – we are called to depend on God at every moment and in every area (Acts 17:28) ... including marital intimacy!

What spiritual issues prevent a regular, satisfying love life?

1. **SLOTH** – laziness with respect to marital intimacy; passivity and unresponsiveness; growing comfortable with bedroom boredom. (See Prov. 10:26, 12:27, 15:19, and 19:15)
2. **UNBELIEF** – God cannot supply what He expects of me or my spouse; the belief that biblical intimacy is beyond the reach of God’s grace; the unwillingness to depend on God’s grace and strength to carry out His expectations of you as a husband or wife.
3. **BITTERNESS** – one of the most common causes of neglected sex!
 - a. Unbelief says “I can’t do this” ... Bitterness says “I won’t do this.”
 - b. Unbelief tells a spouse “You can’t change” ... Bitterness tells a spouse “You won’t change.”
 - c. Unbelief leans away from God’s promises ... Bitterness slams the door: “You defrauded me, and I won’t trust you!” or “You didn’t exercise self-control before we were married; you won’t after!”
4. Every husband and wife not only needs grace from God to prevent these three common areas of sin from showing up in their love life, but they need God’s grace to create an environment where marital intimacy flows from romance.

What would be your idea of the most romantic thing a spouse could do?

“Creativity is simply faith-inspired work, a natural outgrowth of your belief that God cares about your marriage and wants to help you improve it.” Agree or disagree?

5. Romance does not come naturally to most people but is worth pursuing ... it’s the work of grace to overcome the destructiveness of sin in our marriage and to recreate the joy of Adam and Eve’s first night in the Garden!
6. *“Great sex in marriage comes from conscious dependence on the goodness and sovereignty of God, who is at work powerfully to make our marriages a source of spiritual and physical joy.”* (pg. 167)