

When Sinners Say “I Do”

Lesson 11

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.
 - Trade and exploding population made Corinth the epicenter of pornography, brothels, orgies, divorce on demand, sexual abuse, sexual disease and public lewdness.

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.
 - **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.

3. How God desires sexual activity in marriage to function:
 - Adventure in Devotion – this does not mean a mindless, dutiful, my-spouse-is-really-need- 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)
 2. **Devotion to Possession** (vs. 3-4) – spouses are owned by one another. (See Gal. 5:13)

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. One of the primary objectives in sexual relations for a Christian husband and wife is PLEASURE (duh ...) - pleasure in the pleasure of our spouse!
 3. “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.
 4. It’s possible that the defrauding was the result of an over-reaching reaction to the culture or to the Corinthian believer’s past sexual promiscuity. (See 6:9-11)
 5. Demanding conjugal 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!).
 6. Paul implies that marital intimacy is expected to be regular, only broken by mutual agreement to pursue a greater intimacy with God.

Is “greater intimacy with God” the only reason to interrupt intimacy?

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. These are the most common spiritual issues that interrupt a regular and satisfying sex life:
 - a. **SLOTH** – laziness with respect to marital intimacy; passivity and unresponsiveness; growing comfortable with bedroom boredom. (See Prov. 10:26, 12:27 and 19:15)
 - b. **UNBELIEF** – The belief that God cannot supply the ability for 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.
 - c. **BITTERNESS** – one of the most common causes of neglected sex!
 - 1) Unbelief says “I can’t do this” ... Bitterness says “I won’t do this.”
 - 2) Unbelief tells a spouse “You can’t change” ... Bitterness tells a spouse “You won’t change.”
2. 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?

3. 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!
4. *“Great sex in marriage comes from a conscious dependence on the goodness and sovereignty of God, a God who is at work powerfully to make our marriages a source of spiritual and physical joy.” (pg. 167)*