

A close-up photograph of a man and a woman in a romantic embrace, nearly kissing. The man is on the left, wearing glasses and a grey t-shirt. The woman is on the right, also in a grey t-shirt, with her hand near her face. The background is softly blurred.

GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX



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**A Guide to Intimacy
Within Marriage**

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A Guide to Intimacy Within Marriage

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INTRODUCTION

Sex is important to marriage because sex is important to God. Some of us get this crazy notion that God is against sex. But that's not true at all.

God loves sex. He created sex. He created it for us. When used the way it was intended, sex can make a marriage better than ever.

So let's dive into the important, yet seemingly taboo, topic of sex in marriage.

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4 Reasons Why You Should Talk About Sex With Your Spouse

By Scott Kedersha



The problem for many of us is that we don't realize we can actually talk about sex with one another.

After I graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary, I went back to audit a one-week class on sexual intimacy. One of the first components class was an exercise I'll never forget.

Ten large papers hung on the wall in the front of the class. On the top of each page was written a term like sexual intercourse, breast, oral sex, or masturbation.

The assignment for the class: grab some markers and write down all of the slang words we could think of related to each one of the phrases.

I have never excelled more at a seminary assignment. I realized how poorly I had thought about and discussed the body and intimacy all of my life.

The influence of pornography and the discussions I had with friends had clearly distorted my views and the ways I discussed God's gifts of the body and intimacy.

The purpose of the assignment was for us to realize how poorly we communicate about sexual intimacy and to help us become more comfortable in discussing intimacy, the parts of the body, and different aspects of intimacy.

Let's Talk About Sex

The problem for many of us is that we don't realize we can actually talk about sex with one another. And when we discuss it, we can do so using words and phrases that honor the Lord instead of talking about it crassly.

In fact, I believe most couples have almost no clue about how to talk about sex. Either we don't think we are allowed to talk about it, or we feel extremely insecure in discussing anything intimacy-related with our spouse.

I believe communication is the most important skill needed for a great sex life, even more important than bedroom tips, tricks, and techniques. We need to learn how to communicate about intimacy.

Don't Be A Fool

The biggest obstacle when it comes to communication? We are fools. Proverbs 18:2 says: "A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."

Often when it comes to intimacy, we are more interested in sharing our own desires and needs instead of listening with the intent of understanding our spouse.

Here are four challenges, and why we need to improve in communication related to intimacy.

1. Men are, typically, easier to please.

There is not much mystery in pleasing a guy physically. Women, on the other hand, are tougher to please. Men don't know how and we can't read minds.

We need to be told (i.e. communication) what feels good. We need help learning how to understand how to please our wife.

2. We all have expectations of Intimacy.

We need to learn how to communicate those expectations. Otherwise, we will experience frustration and disappointment.

3. Talking about sex is difficult.

We need to learn how to ask for or express what we want or desire. This is called assertiveness, not selfishness. We need to create safety in communication with one another.

- To be clear, just because we want something sexually does not mean we should do it.
- Sharing our desires becomes a great way to put our spouse's desires before our own if we are comfortable doing what they suggest.

4. We're Either Afraid or Ashamed

Often we are afraid to hurt one another or we are ashamed to speak about intimacy. Rather, we choose to not communicate instead of

taking the time to discuss intimacy. If you talk about intimacy, it doesn't mean you're messed up. It's a good and healthy thing to talk about with each other!

We need to discuss how to get out of the routine and try something new. We need to be able to have fun and try new things. Men often tend to be formulaic.

Just because something works one time does not mean it will work the next time you are intimate with your wife. Yet another reason why we need to discuss intimacy with each other.

Your Turn

Discuss the following with your spouse:

- How are we honestly doing in our day-to-day communication?
- Do we have any unresolved conflict in our marriage right now?
- Why is it difficult for us to talk about sexual intimacy?

Is there anything you would like to share with your spouse on how you can improve your sexual intimacy?

How do you and your spouse talk about sex?

The Two Ends of the Spectrum of Sex

By Ryan Frederick



Not all sex is created equal. So how do we keep sex consistent and meaningful?

Regular and consistent sex is extremely important for a healthy marriage. But life gets busy, disconnection happens, and sometimes sex is burdensome.

All of these things can lead to a lack of intimacy and a decrease in sexual satisfaction.

If unchecked, it can create deeper issues like pornography addiction and bitterness. So how do we keep sex consistent and meaningful?

The Spectrum of Sex

Selena and I have discovered that being utterly honest with each other about expectations, types, and frequency of sex is the best way to go. Feeling sexually frustrated, we sat down and discussed a few possible sex scenarios that evolved into a scale of sorts.

Not all sex is created equal. Ever hear of a quickie? Selena and I established a Spectrum of Sex if you will. Sounds epic, right?

We don't actually call it that. But since I have to write something, that name will do. Basically, it is a range that we refer to when discussing sex.

Its meant to provide clarity for communicating each others' expectations when approaching sexy time (cue Barry White).

Sports Car Sex

At one end of the spectrum you have sex that is quick. It's usually to fulfill a physiological need and little else. Think of it like a sports car.

It's quick, flashy, and gets you from A to B. This type of sex is totally fine as long it is clearly communicated.

Most guys begin feeling sexual urges every two to three days. This means they (we) need sex about three times a week.

This is where this end of the spectrum is very useful: busy people don't always have time for long drawn out experiences and sometimes you just need to check it off your list so you can go about your day. It's a great focus enhancer!

For you foodies, think of it as "snack sex." It's a quick fix to curb your hunger until it's time for a seven-course meal.

Freight Train Sex

At the other end of the spectrum, you have sex that is deep, emotionally intimate, and intense.

I like to compare it to a freight train: it may take a while to gain momentum, but once it's full speed, good luck stopping it! It still gets from A to B, but it's much more drawn out and carries a much heavier payload.

Freight train sex is the kind you experience on purpose as a part of your relationship deepening activities like a romantic Friday night date. Both of you are fully present and fully invested in the journey.

To continue the foodie example, this is "feast sex". It takes lots of preparation and time to enjoy, but the bounty is plentiful and the experience is rich.

How We Deal

Selena and I have a basic rule: sex happens every 2-3 days. She expects it, I expect it. Sometimes it's sporty, sometimes it's heavy.

Around Day Two, I start giving Selena my sexy stare, with eyebrows raised and sheepish grin. She knows what I'm thinking. I will often ask, "snack sex?" She knows what's up and we're off to the races!

Other times, we set aside an evening where we can light some candles and bust out the Barry White. Either way, having a set spectrum of expectation helps us play from the same sheet music. The key is unity of expectation.

How You Deal

It's important that you talk together and establish your Spectrum of Sex. It will be unique to you and your spouse's needs. Set the ground rules for how to communicate and what to expect.

Talk about frequency, types, and expectations. Make a commitment to each other to be selfless in sex and explain to your spouse (and listen to them explain) your needs.

By setting aside time in our minds for the various types of sex helps us stay close and connected, even when life gets busy and romance isn't practical.

Where do you and your spouse fall on the Spectrum of Sex?

Improve Your Intimacy in 30 Minutes

By Casey Caston



We didn't talk about sex because no one taught us how to. That changed when we discovered the post-sex wrap-up.

Most of the questions we get from couples are about being stuck in a sexual rut. For years, we didn't talk about it because no one taught us how to have a healthy conversation about our sex life.

That all changed when we discovered the post-sex wrap-up.

Some dear friends mentioned that this transformed their sex life and gave them the insights needed to love their spouse in the specific ways they wanted to be loved.

This post-game pillow talk focuses on what they like, didn't like, what position feels good, fantasies, and affirming each other. This is a time for no judgments.

The goal is to build their love life. We use this all the time and it works!

Your Turn

We want you to try this out. Set some ground rules and restate your goals to boost your love life and to learn more about each other.

Set aside at least 30 minutes to listen to the heart of your spouse. Here's some questions you can use to kick start the conversation.

- What about our sex life makes you excited and anticipate the next time?
- Are you comfortable discussing our sexual likes and dislikes? Why or why not?
- What kind of physical touch best says, "I love you"?
- Who do we know that has the kind of marriage that we want?
- How affectionate would you like to be with me?
- What are your turn-offs?
- How will we let each other know what we want sexually?
- What need of yours have I not been able to satisfy?
- How can we make our sex life better? Get creative.
- What are your deepest desires, hopes and dreams?

After you've gone through this list, let your spouse's answers marinate for awhile. Really listen to what they shared. Validate them and their feelings because this doesn't come natural for many people.

How can you improve your marriage intimacy today?

What Do Towels Have To Do With Sex?

By John McGee



The idea of towels and things being connected has become a helpful metaphor for us in our marriage.

A couple of years ago, I was late to a meeting and rushing out of the house when my wife said, "I have some thoughts about our sex life."

Suddenly I wasn't in such a rush! When I asked about her thoughts, she laughed as she said, "Well, really it's more about the towels. . ."

At this point, I had no idea what she was talking about—but she had lead with the subject of sex, so even though confused, I was still interested.

She reminded me when I come out of the shower, I often leave my clothes and towels on the floor and she would later have to pick up.

She explained that it felt very inconsiderate and it made it hard for her to want to have sex with me.

Cue the scene where the husband looks completely dumbfounded—because I was. I asked, “But can you see the towels when we have sex?”

Pick Up Your Towels

I was trying really hard to understand, how something she couldn't see in the moment could possibly have something to do with our sex life.

We laughed at how differently we saw the situation and how something we couldn't even see could be connected to having sex.

Even though I don't share the same concerns about towels on the floor, I assured her that I didn't want to be inconsiderate or create work for her.

In fact, every time I get out of the shower, I pick up my clothes, hang up my towel, and buff the floor. (I am kidding about one of those.)

Towels Are A Metaphor

The idea of towels and things being connected has become a helpful metaphor for us in our marriage. There are things in our marriage that aren't actually about sex, but impact our sex life.

For my wife, Pam, it is often the way I help or don't help around the house, and the way I speak to her. For me, it is often around issues of attention and respect.

Every couple wants a better sex life. This often leads people to think the answer lies in something new to wear or a new position to try.

After working with countless couples, I've come to see that often it isn't about those things. It is about the towels.

It is the things in the relationships like trust, good will, and kind words that don't seem to be connected on the surface, but can have a huge impact—either positively or negatively—on your sex life.

What Are Your Towels?

You can't see them when you are having sex, but make no mistake they impact your intimacy.

If you are looking to improve your sex life, explain the metaphor of the towels to your spouse and ask them, "What are my towels?" Experience tells me it definitely a conversation worth having!

What are the "towels" in your marriage?

5 Things Every Married Couple Needs to Know About Sex

By Dave Willis



Marriages that don't prioritize what happens in the bedroom will usually end in a courtroom.

Sexual intimacy is one of the most powerful gifts God created. It's designed to bring a man and woman together in a physical, emotional, and spiritual bond that creates pleasure, intimacy and procreation.

Marriages that neglect or misuse this gift are headed for frustration and most likely, divorce. Most marriages that don't prioritize what happens in the bedroom will usually end in a courtroom.

A 30-Day Sex Challenge

I was reminded of this when some friends of mine were having a marriage crisis and headed for divorce. They had drifted far apart and felt that there was no marriage left.

As a last effort, they decided to take a 30-Day Challenge and committed to making love every day for a month. By the end of the month, their marriage was stronger and their intimacy was reignited.

Their marriage had new momentum which has carried them forward. They're the first to say that it takes a lot more than sex to build a strong marriage. But it's nearly impossible to build a strong marriage without it!

What the Bible Says About Sex

The Bible even gives us specific instruction about prioritizing the gift of sex within marriage and warns husbands and wives that it's dangerous to deny each other this gift.

"The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations" —1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Here are things every married couple needs to know about sex:

1. You Should Be Having More Of It

A healthy sex life is about more than just frequency, but frequency is an important factor.

I'm convinced that many (if not most) arguments in marriage stem directly or indirectly from sexual frustration.

2. You Should ONLY Be Having It With Each Other

It's sad that we live in a world where I have to clarify this, but monogamy is the only way a marriage can work.

Don't look outside your marriage to fulfill your sexual needs. I would argue that this includes porn.

Bringing another person into your bed or you mind will eventually destroy the intimacy God intended sex to be enjoyed exclusively between a husband and wife.

3. Better Sex Starts Outside The Bedroom

When communication is better, your sex life will usually improve. So talk, text and flirt with each other throughout the day.

When you're serving each other's needs in other areas, your sex life will usually improve. (Guys, this means be willing to do the dishes).

When you show genuine thoughtfulness to one another throughout the day, the night is more likely to end well!

4. Don't Use Sex As Leverage

In some marriages, sex (or denying sex) is used as a way to reward or to punish the other spouse.

Over time, this dysfunctional practice will cheapen the power of sex, cause resentment and also erode the trust and intimacy.

5. Have fun!

Sex is supposed to be fun. So enjoy it! As you do, you'll find your

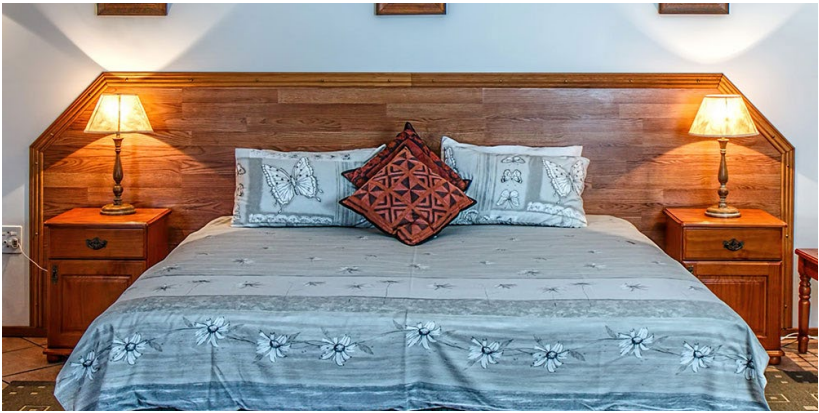
stress levels decreasing, your laughter increasing, and a more positive outlook on life together.

The happiest couples I know seem to be the ones who make a vibrant and frequent sex life a priority in their marriage.

How can you start to prioritize sex in your marriage?

5 Reasons To Leave The Lights On For Sex

By Shaunti Feldhaun



Men secretly feel so vulnerable when they approach their wives for intimacy: Do I measure up? Does she want me?

Yes, the idea is scary for many women! But in my years of social research, I have uncovered many truths that men wish we knew, but they don't know how to tell us.

I heard the heart behind this wish—and discovered five surprising reasons to take the risk.

1. When He Knows You Want Him, It Increases Intimacy

A husband is powerfully impacted by knowing his wife desires him. And few things signal "desire" more than when he sees his wife engaged in their time together.

Men secretly feel so vulnerable when they approach their wives for intimacy: Do I measure up? Does she want me? Am I not enough for her?

Sometimes a man will keep his guard up to avoid the sting of inadequacy if he senses his wife may not truly be all in.

So, if he sees that you're engaged, he can set all concerns aside, let down his guard, and take the risk of opening up emotionally. And that vulnerability leads to much greater intimacy.

2. Trust Leads to True Oneness

Vulnerability works both ways. We feel so vulnerable at the idea of turning on those lights because we too wonder: Do I measure up?

I don't look like I used to. Will he be satisfied with me? Turned off? Those extra pounds or least-favorite features loom in our minds.

But nearly all the men in my research told me they loved their wife's individuality and aren't expecting or looking for the cover model.

That is our hang-up, not theirs! We need to trust that our husband loves us as we are. And when we let down our guard and trust, we reach mutual vulnerability and true oneness.

3. He Is Visual

Yes, this has been stated many times. But it's worth repeating: a man's emotions are tied to his eyes.

He drinks in and savors those images of you in your intimate time together in a wonderful, emotional way that you as a woman may never fully understand.

But when those visual memories come back to his mind, he feels a rush of affection and love for you. They are a bulwark and ammunition against the impact of all those other images that confront him out in the world every day.

4. He Delights In Knowing He Has Delighted You

Did you hear that? He delights in knowing he has delighted you. The vast majority of men I've interviewed and surveyed have confirmed it: your man is most pleased when he pleases you.

Three out of four said that for a man, sex is empty if his wife isn't satisfied – or if he can't tell that she was satisfied.

The men said it makes an immense, delightful difference for a man to be able to see his wife's reactions in some way.

5. It Isn't As Big A Risk As You Think

Have you ever resisted something out of fear, only to try it later and wish you hadn't waited so long? Many women have told me this was like that for them: it took courage, but was one of the best things they did for their marriage.

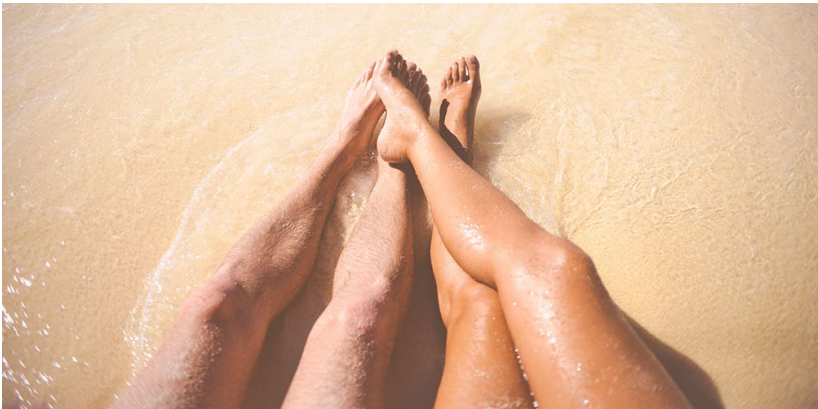
Because they as women saw something too: they saw with their own eyes that their fears were empty. They saw that their husbands really did love them and delight in them as they were.

These women gained confidence they never expected. And they found themselves unexpectedly moved by their husband's almost gleeful delight in this new experience together.

Try it. I'll bet the response you get will be the best possible incentive to continue!

What To Do When You Have Different Sex Drives

By Casey Caston



You will rarely be on the same level, so how do you keep this sensitive issue from ruining other areas of your relationship?

A common issue for many couples that results in frustration and disharmony is missing the beat with your sex drive.

One spouse wants it more than the other creating a sense of rejection and loneliness every time a pass is batted away. The other wants it less and now feels like its a chore or marital duty.

Reality is that you will rarely be on the same level, so how do you

keep this sensitive issue from ruining other areas of your relationship?

Here are some things to keep in mind so that your different sex drives don't wreak havoc on your marriage.

1. Ask For What You Want, Don't Complain About What You Don't Have

We cannot stress this enough tell your spouse how you like to be touched and what turns you on. They are not mind readers.

Be specific and very explicit. Do not sit there silently or verbally protesting about the problems, rather in love, communicate early and often.

2. Quality Over Quantity

Some couples are content with having sex once a week. Others prefer 3-5 times per week.

What matters is that you're both enjoying it and connecting on a deeper level. Quality is the key when it comes to sex!

Try things like making eye contact when you orgasm, affirm each other on their looks, and spend time snuggling afterwards.

3. Don't Base Your Marriage Only On Sex

Sex is just one ingredient towards intimacy. Just because you aren't doing it like bunnies, doesn't mean there is anything wrong with you.

Cultivate a spirit of fondness, compassion, tenderness, respect and a solid friendship to go the distance.

4. Connect Emotionally, Not Just Physically

If you're having a hard time building physical intimacy, be sure to find ways to improve your emotional intimacy.

Go on date nights, take frequent walks, ask open ended questions, stay curious about each other.

5. Stop Making Excuses

We make time for the things that matter most in life.

If you're not in the mood because you're too tired, then start saying no to things so you can have enough energy for your sex life.

Show your spouse you care by making the time to be intimate.

6. Examine Your Sexual Baggage

Perhaps your parents shamed you by telling you sex was bad and harmful, then you get married and somehow all the scripting over the years is supposed to vanish in one magical wedding night.

These challenges can be tough to overcome.

Talk openly with each other about your views of sex before you got married. If there was severe emotional trauma related to abuse or addictions, seek out a trained counselor to walk through these sensitive issues.

Go out there and have the wildest sex of your life. Married sex is the best as we move from immature self focused sex to mature giving and receiving of this precious gift!

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