Marriage Enrichment



**Lesson Topic: Sexual Intimacy**

**Week One Homework**

Sexual intimacy in marriage is the physical and emotional union of a man and his wife and is a means of celebrating love, having children, and experiencing pleasure. God created sex. It is holy and good when enjoyed in the context of a loving relationship between a husband and wife within the protective commitment of marriage. You and your spouse honor God when you love, serve and enjoy each other sexually. God thinks sexual intimacy is important and scripture contains numerous guidelines and warnings. Physical and emotional intimacy is highlighted in the “**Song of Solomon**” - the intimate story about a young husband and wife - describing their love, courtship and marriage.

***As homework for this week, read the Song of Solomon, one chapter per day and discuss it with your spouse*** to see what you both can learn from its verses and apply it to your marriage. (Note: There are eight chapters in total so *you will need to read two chapters one night*. It might be helpful for you to use a study bible or bible commentary to gain some extra insight into the verses.)

This week you will learn more about God’s plan for you to enjoy the wonderful gift of sexual intimacy in your marriage.

**Scripture Memory Verses**:

*“*The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:4 NIV)

**In the Word Together**

Read and discuss the following verses and questions with your spouse:

1. What do the memory verse 1 Corinthians 7:4 and Song of Solomon 6:3 tell you about your sexual intimacy with your spouse and your body?

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1. Read Song of Solomon 1:2-3, 10-11 and 2:8:

What physical senses are heightened in the husband and his wife in these verses? What can you conclude about how God designed you to be able to enjoy each other sexually?

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1. Read Song of Solomon 1:5-6; 4:1-7 and 7:1-9:

The wife in the Song of Solomon is a young rural Shulamite woman who worked in her family’s vineyard. She was very insecure about her physical beauty despite being lovely as noted in verse 5. How does her husband help her to overcome her insecurities in verse 4:1-7 and 7:1-9? What can you learn from that?

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1. Read Song of Solomon 5:10-16:

How does the wife give you a good model for how to show love and appreciation for your spouse?

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1. Read Song of Solomon 1:17; 2:16; 4:16-5:1 and 7:10

What do these verses tell you about God’s desire and plan for your sexual intimacy for your enjoyment, spontaneity, commitment and response towards each other?

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**Talk About It Together:**

Discuss the following questions with your spouse and write down your shared responses. Remember that transparency and openness in your marriage is developed by creating and being a safe place for your spouse to express his/her thoughts. This is especially important when talking about emotional issues – such as your sexual relationship.

1. What are some ways you can help each other with any insecurities you may each have about your physical attributes? From what you know about God, what importance does He place on the outer vs. the inner beauty of a person? How is His model of unconditional love something you can carry through to your marriage?

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1. Song of Solomon 4:9 says “*You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.*” When did your spouse capture your heart? Reminisce with each other about when this happened. It is important to remember special times to keep your romance young and fresh as the months and years pass. Be on guard to keep the passion of these early years ignited throughout your marriage.

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1. In Song of Solomon 4:15 the husband tells his wife “you are a garden fountain, a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon”. His bride was as refreshing to him as a fountain. Your spouse needs you to be a safe haven where he/she can be refreshed. In what ways does your spouse refresh you and build you up?

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1. Communicating love and expressing admiration in both words and actions can enhance every marriage. What are some of the ways that you communicate to your husband/wife that they *are the most important person in your life*? Do they feel loved by what you are doing (is it in their “love language”)?

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1. Discuss the following chart with your spouse to get a better understanding of his/her desires and needs. Talk about any of the differences between men and women that was enlightening to you or that you want to understand better. [The chart is from the book “Intimate Issues” page 43].

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Typical Differences in Sexuality** | | |
|  | **Men** | **Women** |
| Orientation | Physical | Relational |
|  | Compartmentalized | Holistic |
|  | Physical oneness | Emotional Oneness |
|  | Variety | Security |
|  | Sex is a high priority | Other priorities may be higher |
| Stimulation | Sight | Touch |
|  | Smell | Attitudes |
|  | Body-centered | Actions |
|  |  | Words |
|  |  | Person-centered |
| Needs | Respect | Understanding |
|  | Admiration | Love |
|  | Physically needed | Emotionally needed |
|  | Not to be put down | Time |
| Sexual response | Not cyclical | Cyclical |
|  | Quick excitement | Slow excitement |
|  | Initiates (usually) | Responder (Usually) |
|  | Difficult to distract | Easily distracted |
| Orgasm | Propagation of species | Propagation of oneness |
|  | Shorter, more intense | Longer, more in-depth |
|  | Physically oriented | Emotionally oriented |
|  | Orgasm usually needed for satisfaction | Satisfaction possible without orgasm |

**Good healthy communication is critical for true emotional and physical intimacy. As part of next week’s Homework you will invest some extended time to talk about ways to improve the emotional and physical intimacy in your marriage.**

**Apply What We Learned:**

* Each spouse plan a date night to enjoy some time together this month. It does not have to be fancy or expensive. In whatever you do, communicate your love for your spouse and put his/her wants and/or needs ahead of your own.
* Write a love letter to your spouse and incorporate your answers to some of the following questions in your letter. Give this letter to your spouse on your “date night”. Be sure to tuck the letter you receive from your spouse in a safe place to pull out again down the road after many happy years of marriage. It will bless you tremendously!
* How is your spouse physically attractive to you? Remember the great detail that Solomon and his wife said about each other!
* What were the qualities that attracted you most to your spouse when you first met? How is he/she beautiful to you on the inside in addition to the outside?
* What are some things you really appreciate about your spouse in this first season of marriage?
* How have your differences helped you specifically to grow spiritually and emotionally and in a way that helped make your marriage stronger?
* What steps do you commit to take to love God and your spouse even more as you “do life together”?

**Recommended Additional Resources:**

* *“Intended for Pleasure”* by Dr. Ed Wheat
* *“Intimacy Ignited”* by Dr. Joseph & Linda Dillow, Dr. Peter & Lorriane Pintus
* *“Intimate Issues – Conversations Woman to Woman*” by Linda Dillow, Lorriane Pintus
* *“Sheet Music” by Dr. Kevin Leman*

**Breakout Time – Come prepared to share and talk about the following:**

1. How have you followed through with the goals you set last month to improve the oneness in your marriage in regards to embracing your role & responsibilities in your marriage and loving/respecting your spouse?

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1. What has the Lord taught you in your personal times with him this past week? What are you reading and how many days were you in the word and prayer?

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1. What can you do to more fully express your love for your spouse outside of the bedroom? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What can you do to love your spouse by putting his or her needs ahead of your own in regards to your physical intimacy together?

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