



# SEXUALITY IN MARRIAGE

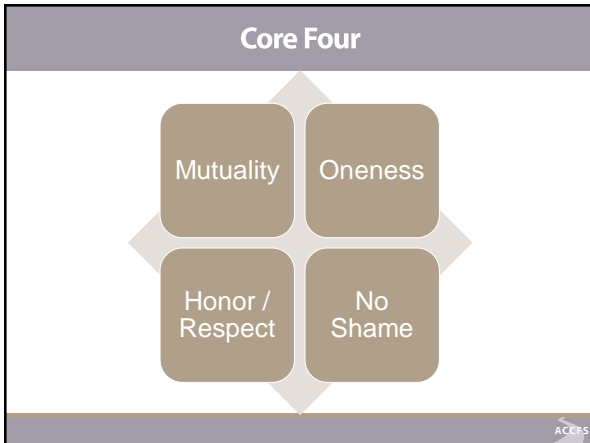
Apostolic Christian Counseling & Family Services  
877-370-9988 www.accounseling.org info@accounseling.org



## Biblical Foundations

WHAT DOES GOD THINK ABOUT SEX?

- LIVING THE CORE FOUR
- CULTIVATING HEALTHY SEXUALITY



### Core Four: Mutuality

**1. Mutuality:** while either spouse can initiate sexual intimacy, they both agree to any sexual behavior.

- Neither spouse feels forced or controlled.
- Each spouse seeks to meet the other's sexual needs.

*“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence [kindness]; and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not [don't deprive] one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency [lack of self-control].” 1 Corinthians 7:3-5*

### Core Four: Oneness

**2. Oneness:** sexual intimacy bonds the couple's marriage and strengthens their sense of being one (“We”).

- Experience God's design for sexuality in their marriage.

*“Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Genesis 2:24*

### Core Four: No Shame

**3. No Shame:** the couple enjoys their sexual relationship and experiences pleasure without either of the spouses feeling shame.

*“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” Genesis 2:25*

*“Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.” SOS 4:7*

## Core Four: Honor/Respect

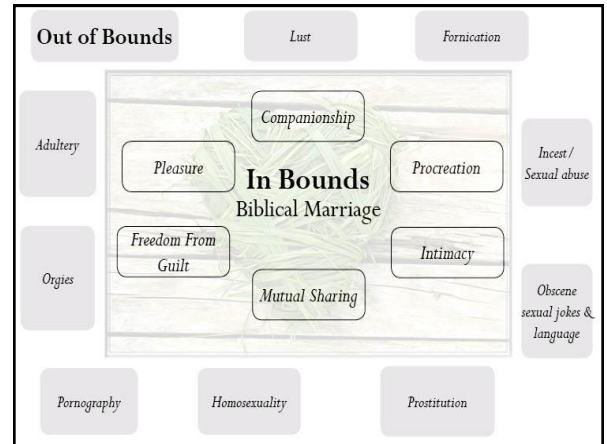
4. **Honor/Respect:** each spouse feels prized by the other; the best interests of the other spouse are always kept in mind.

- Each spouse takes seriously the opportunity to prepare himself/herself to be sexual (i.e., hygiene, time/priorities, mentally).

*"Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished [intoxicated] always with her love." Proverbs 5:18-19*

*"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Hebrews 13:4*

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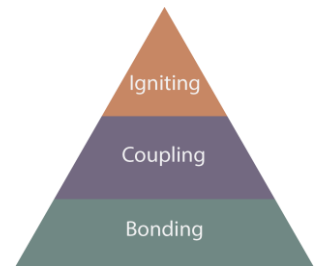


## Biblical Foundations

- CULTIVATING HEALTHY SEXUALITY

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## Intimacy by Color

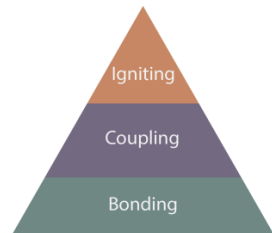


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## Green = Bonding Intimacy

***We are intimate companions and friends.***

- Heart to heart connection.
- Active listening.
- Give time and attention.
- Give tender looks.
- Physical touch



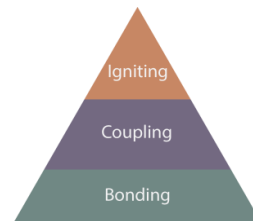
ROSENAU & NEEL (2013) TOTAL INTIMACY

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## Purple = Coupling Intimacy

***We share a special, exclusive, romantic connection.***

- Kissing, making-out
- Cuddling
- Flirting
- Sensual touch
- Sharing of deep desires



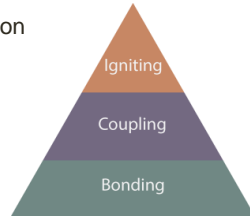
ROSENAU & NEEL (2013) TOTAL INTIMACY

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## Orange = Igniting Intimacy

**We are lovers.**

- Sexual intimacy and passion
- Foreplay
- Genital touching
- Intercourse



**Pleasure Mindset:**  
Excitement vs.  
Attachment

## Considering *Pleasure*

"Never forget that when we are dealing with any pleasure in its healthy and normal and satisfying form, we are, in a sense, on the Enemy's [God's] ground...He [God] made the pleasure: all our research so far has not enabled us to produce one. All we can do is to encourage the humans to take the pleasures which our Enemy [God] has produced, at times, or in ways, or in degrees, which He [God] has forbidden." — **C.S. Lewis, Screwtape Letters**

*"Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love."* **Proverbs 5:18-19**

## Pursuing Pleasure: Good or Bad?

- "Erotic" is the pursuit of sexual desire and arousal.
  - God designed to be pleasurable and powerful.
  - Important to pursue biblical, not secular, mindset.
- Unbiblical thinking unhinges sexual pleasure from a covenant marriage relationship that respects God's design.



## Excitement vs. Attachment

**Secular Mindset**  
excitement-focused

"Seek higher levels of pleasure and excitement and you will be happy ever after."

**Biblical Mindset**  
attachment-focused

"Honor God's covenant design by bonding well and seeking mutual fulfillment and you will find sexuality pleasurable and exciting."

## Erotic vs Covenant

**Erotic**

**Focused on "Me"**

- Dopamine & adrenaline
- "Exotic is erotic" thinking leads to continually seeking novelty and higher levels of excitement.
- Couples disappointed often seek to get erotic sexuality back.
- Seeking excitement outside of God's bounds creates diminishing returns and harms the bond.

**Covenant**

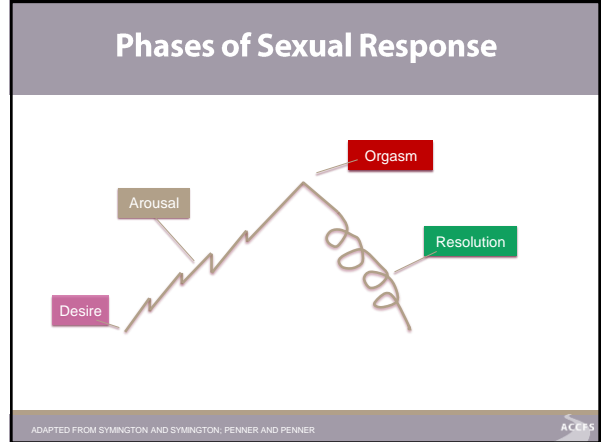
**Focused on "We"**

- Oxytocin
- Acceptance and safe connection by grace creates deeper bonding and experience of pure pleasure.
- Intimate sexuality is focused on knowing and being known.
- Intimate sexuality according to God's design allows for excitement and strengthens the bond.



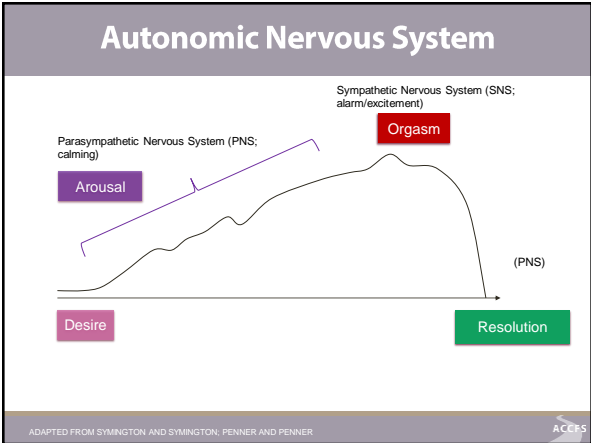
## Relaxation & Sexual Response

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## Goals for Sexual Touch: CPR

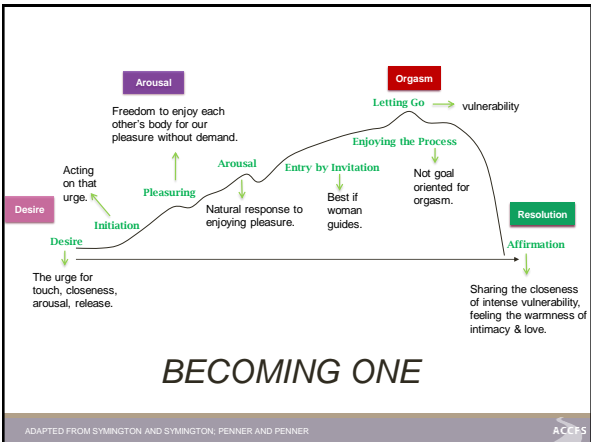
- Connection
- Pleasure
- Relaxation
- Orgasm/Performance

By spending time with CPR couples will:

- Engage their parasympathetic nervous system (calming).
- Be able to be more present with each other.
- Avoid moving to genital sexuality prematurely.
- Enjoy the process of moving through the full sexual experience.

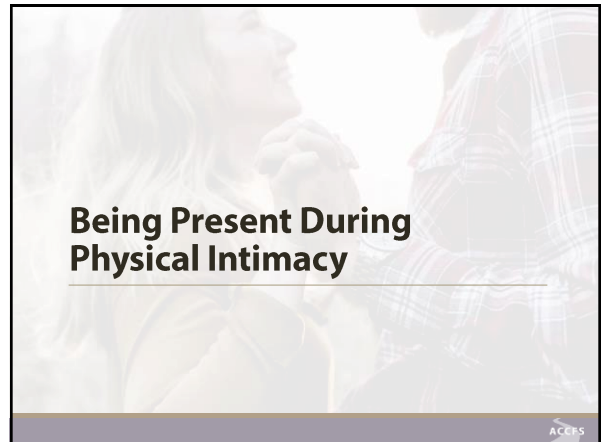
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## Being Present During Physical Intimacy

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## Two Screen Method and Physical Intimacy

1. Reduce anxiety and stress.
2. Focus on the present moment.
3. Shift from the “doing-mind” to the “being-mind”.
4. Detach from distractions, judgmental thoughts, and negative beliefs.
5. Sensate Focus – learning to focus on the physical sensations (touch, pleasure, etc.)

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## Two-Screen Method

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FRONT SCREEN

SAFE SCREEN



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FRONT SCREEN

SAFE SCREEN



ATTENTION  
REACTIVITY  
AVOIDANCE

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## Step 1: Accept & Redirect

FRONT SCREEN

SAFE SCREEN



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## Step 2: Use Front Screen Anchors

1. Mindfulness Skills
  2. Loving-Actions
1. **Acceptance:** “I can accept this current feeling.”
  2. **Redirect Attention:** Gently keep redirecting to the Front Screen
  3. **Present Moment:** Fully engage in 5 senses in the present moment.

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## Reflection Questions

What teaching from this presentation stood out to you the most?

Using the "Intimacy by Color" triangle, which color do you feel needs attention?

What are possible barriers that get in the way of you slowing down and enjoying bonding during sexual intimacy?

[www.accounseling.org/sexualityinmarriage](http://www.accounseling.org/sexualityinmarriage)

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## Enhancing Marital Sexuality

Some tools and techniques to help make your sexual relationship more satisfying for both of you.

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### APPENDICES

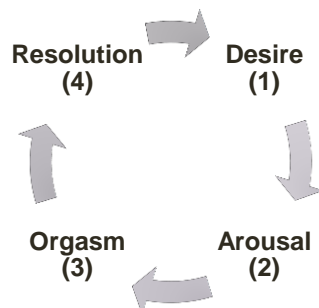
APPENDIX A	SEXUAL RESPONSE CYCLES
APPENDIX B	UNIQUENESS OF MALE & FEMALE SEXUALITY
APPENDIX C	LEARNING ABOUT ONE ANOTHER
APPENDIX D	UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE ISSUES
APPENDIX E	REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS
APPENDIX F	TIME INVESTMENT IS IMPORTANT
APPENDIX G	DIFFERING SEX DRIVES
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APPENDIX J	FAMILY PLANNING
APPENDIX K	SHARING ISSUES WITH SEXUAL HISTORY
APPENDIX L	HEALTHY SEXUALITY FOR CHILDREN

## Sexual Response Cycles

APPENDIX A

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### 4 Phases of Sexual Response



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### Response Cycle: Desire

- This phase of sexual response refers to openness to or seeking out sexual activity.
- Thinking about sex (anticipation) is a key component of sexual desire.

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## Response Cycle: Personal Factors can impact Desire

- Physical health (ex. disease, weight, hormones)
- Body Image (especially negative comparison)
- Stress
- Age
- Mental Health (depression, etc.)
- Medications
- Your attitudes about sex
- Sexual history (physical development, abuse, sin, etc.)

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## Response Cycle: Marital Factors can impact Desire

- Communication and time together.
- Emotional and spiritual intimacy in your marriage (over the long term).
- Amount of conflict in your relationship.
- Concerns about children (noise, interruptions, etc.)
- How well you communicate about sexuality.

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## Atmosphere can be Key

- Lighting
- Music/Sounds
- Dress
- Location
- Interruption free
- Comfortable temperature
- Soothing smells
- Adequate time
- Energy

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## Response Cycle: Arousal

- Arousal refers to building sexual tension as a result of focusing on and nurturing sexual feelings.
- Physical changes are noted in both men and women.
- Arousal focuses your attention on the senses and enhancing pleasure.

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## Response Cycle: Building Arousal

### Foreplay:

- Foreplay is a chance for you to show love and honor to your spouse... it **is** making love.
- Lack of adequate foreplay is one of the most common reasons for sexual dissatisfaction and/or sexual dysfunction in couples.

### Sensate Focus:

- Begin with non-genital caressing, kissing and cuddling and slowly move toward genital pleasuring.
- Playful, mutual exploration.
- Pay attention to the senses & letting passion build.
- This is a time to verbally honor and express love to your spouse.

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## Arousal Considerations

- Each spouse will have different preferences about what does and does not feel good.
- What feels good to you may feel uncomfortable to your spouse.
- Communication about preferences is very important!
- The principle of "honoring and preferring" one another means we seek to bless our spouse by learning about, and adjusting to, his/her preferences.

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## Response Cycle: Orgasm

- Significant increase and peaking of sexual excitement/arousal.
- Letting go of control and allowing oneself to experience the intensity of the intersection of the 4 dimensions (physical, emotional, relational, spiritual).
- Both men and women experience a significant number of physical changes as they reach climax.

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## Response Cycle: Resolution

- Time after orgasm that a couple spends enjoying and holding each other.
- Deeply personal and affirming.
- Both experience their physical bodies relaxing and decreasing in intensity.

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## The Uniqueness Of Male And Female Sexuality

### APPENDIX B

*"So god created man in his own image, in the image of god created he him; male and female created he them." Genesis 1:27*

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## Uniqueness: Male Response

- Males usually quickly move into the arousal phase (although this will vary with age).
- Sexual desire in males is often experienced as physical tension.
- Men tend to experience emotional intimacy through sexuality.
- The traditional sexual response cycle model (Desire, Arousal, Orgasm, and Resolution) seems to fit male sexuality quite well.

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## Note to Women

- It is important to understand men tend to be stimulated visually.
- While sexual arousal in men is not dependent upon emotional intimacy, this doesn't mean men don't want or need emotional intimacy!
- Be aware of the fact your husband is bombarded with sexual temptation on a daily basis.

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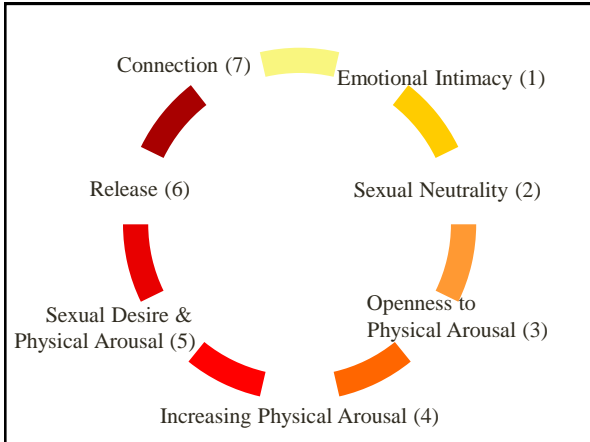
## Uniqueness: Female Response

- Female sexual desire is often misunderstood by both men and women.
- Orgasm in women must be nurtured. It is not inevitable as it is for most males.
- Traditional models of sexual response cycles (Desire, Arousal, Orgasm, Resolution) have not adequately explained female sexuality.
- More recent understandings of female sexuality have shed light on why women and men often have differing levels of sexual desire.

Basson, R. (2002). Women's sexual desire - Disordered or misunderstood? *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 28, 17-28.

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**Husband's:**  
Understanding your wife's unique sexual response cycle is a practical way to "dwell with [her] according to knowledge."

*"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered ."*  
1 Peter 3:7

## Note to Men

- Most men underestimate how important emotional intimacy & connection are to their wife's sexual response.
- Remember: for your wife emotional connection and foreplay aren't optional... they are essential!
- Slowing down the "rush" to intercourse will help you become a better lover and increase your sexual satisfaction as a couple.

## Uniqueness: Older Couples

Hormone levels drop over time for men and women resulting in several changes:

- The physical body changes and loses tone.
- This may affect the level of desire for physical intimacy.
- This may affect the ability to engage physically in sexual intimacy.
  - For women, it may affect lubrication and result in discomfort.
  - For men, it may affect ability to become physically aroused.

## Older Couples: Respect and Honor

- Accept that one or both partners may have a strong desire to continue being intimate.
- Respect there may be greater differences between you and your spouse.
- Women should respect that sex may still be a very important part of your husband's identity and his need for pleasure may remain high in spite of decreased physical response.
  - You will need to be supportive and encouraging of his masculinity if he is less able to engage in sex as he would desire.
- Men should respect that sex may be less pleasurable and may be less comfortable for their wives.

## Older Couples: Ways to Respond

- Find additional ways to be physically intimate that are mutually satisfactory.
- Realize there may be more need for thoughtful foreplay.
- Consider a medical consult to determine if there are health conditions that interfere with desire or ability and may be treatable.
  - Consider specific exercises that can strengthen pelvic muscles (i.e., Kegel exercises).
- Be open with each other about ways to be helpful and respectful in love making.



## Learning About One Another

APPENDIX C

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## Anatomy and Physiology

- Learn the names, locations, and functions of both the male and female sexual organs.
  - Particularly, men need to commit to learning about your wife's sexual anatomy.
- If you're not sure, obtain one of the books we recommend on marital sexuality.
- Teach your spouse about your body.
- Don't assume you know your spouse's body as well as s/he does **AND** don't assume your spouse understands your body.

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## Giving and Receiving

- Learn about your spouse's favorite sexual preferences and focus on them.
  - *1 Corinthians 7:3 "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband."*
- Over time it is often helpful for couples to take turns giving and receiving pleasure to the other.
- Take turns initiating and directing your sexual experience.

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## What Women Say They Want from Sex

- Women want to be physically close.
- Women want to spend time with their husbands (sex as a process versus sex as a goal).
- Women want time for talking.
- Women want romance not just sex.
- Women want to be able to say, "not now."
- Women want to be appreciated for more than sex.
- Women want to please their husbands.

Hart, A., Hart-Webber, C., & Taylor, D.L. (1998). *Secrets of Eve: Understanding the Mystery of Female Sexuality*.

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## What Men Say They Want from Sex

- Men want to know they are not abnormal.
- Men want their wives to understand that their sex drive is strong.
- Men wish their wives understood more about how sexual temptation affects their lives.
- Men wish their wives would initiate sex.
- Men want to be wanted sexually.
- Men want variety in lovemaking.
- Men don't want the kids to ruin the couple's sex life.
- Men often wish their wives would be more open to discussing sex.

Hart, A. (1994). *The Sexual Man*. Dallas: Word.

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## Recommended Book on Sexuality in Christian Marriage

Wheat, E., & Wheat, G. (2010). [Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage](#). (4th Edition). Revell.

Gardner, T. (2002). [Sacred Sex: A Spiritual Celebration of Oneness in Marriage](#). WaterBrooks.

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## Understanding Performance Issues

APPENDIX D

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### Resolve to Communicate More Clearly about Initiating Sex

- Your spouse **cannot** read your mind.
- If you are not clear in sharing your thoughts, feelings and intents about being sexual, **expect** to be misunderstood.
- If you think your spouse is making gestures that might be sexual in nature, check them out.

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### Reduce Performance Anxiety

- One of the most common sources of sexual problems.
- This anxiety is a result of negative self-talk.
- Spouses are often completely unaware of the other's self-talk.
- Remember, sex is about pleasure **not** performance.
- Satisfaction with sexuality has less to do with "achieving" orgasm than it does with enjoying the journey and "arriving" there.

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### Reduce Performance Anxiety Cont'd

- Relax, be yourself, and enjoy the moment.
- You do not have to have orgasms at the same time in order to have high sexual satisfaction in your marriage.
- Performance is *overrated and skewed* by the entertainment industry - which is unfortunately where many people get most of their sex education.

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### A Few Reminders

#### Attend to Hygiene:

Both husbands and wives need to make sure they pay attention to their personal hygiene when preparing for sex.

Bad breath, body odor, etc. can be hindrances to your spouse.

#### Adequate Lubrication:

Inadequate lubrication is a common issue.

The amount of natural lubrication a woman has will vary widely over time as she ages.

Inadequate lubrication can be a very painful problem if not addressed.

K-Y Jelly is a soluble, water-based lubricant.

Do not use petroleum based lubricants.

### Varying Your Routine

- Over time couples need to vary their sexual routine.
- Variations in type and length of foreplay and sexual intercourse are most common.
- When mutually deciding upon any sexual activity ask, "Is this Godly, respectful, and will it promote oneness with my spouse?"
- It is essential spouses not feel coerced, manipulated, or forced into any type of sexual activity.

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## Realistic Expectations

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APPENDIX E

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## Get Your Expectations in Line with Reality

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- Accept and adjust to your spouse's sexual comfort zone.
- Not all orgasms are "off the charts."
- Focus, instead, on deepening the quality of your sexual relationship.
- Do not allow yourself to wish your spouse was like someone else.

ACCESS

## Deal with Letdowns Due to Inaccurate Expectations

- Many couples experience disappointment in their sexual lives because of inaccurate expectations.
- Forgive yourself and each other and move on.
- You don't have to repeat the mistakes of the past.
- Learn about sexuality together (read, get counseling, etc.)
- Practice makes perfect.

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## Expand Your Definition of Sexuality

- Often couples over-focus on genital sexuality to the exclusion of other expressions of sexuality including kissing, hugging, massage, caressing, talking, etc.
- Research is clear couples who extend their lovemaking have higher rates of sexual satisfaction and significantly higher rates of consistency in female orgasm.

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## Time Investment Is Important

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APPENDIX F

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## Set Aside Time for Non-Sexual Touching

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- Couples need regular times of hugging, cuddling, and kissing that ***DO NOT*** lead to sexual intercourse.
- Often one spouse violates this principle by making *any* touch a starting point for sex.
- Early-on, agree together about whether or not you will proceed to sexual intercourse.

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## Maintaining Passion in Marriage

- Go on regular dates and getaways.
- Having special times together alone allows you to build the emotional intimacy that is foundational to your sexual relationship.
- Intensity during sexual intercourse cannot, in and of itself, sustain the spiritual and emotional connection couples desire in their marriages long-term.
- Romance and time spent focusing on your relationship is one of the most important keys to lasting sexual passion in marriage.

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## A Simple Guideline for Couple Time

1. **“Divert” Daily:** make time to discuss what is on your mind, what is happening in your schedule, and how you are doing.
2. **“Withdraw” Weekly:** time to be together, share, prioritize, refocus, and connect.
3. **“Maintain” Monthly:** time alone to enjoy each other’s company (ex. date night, etc.)
4. **“Abandon” Annually:** some type of extended getaway alone.

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## Differing Sex Drives

APPENDIX G

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## Dealing with Different Sex Drives

- This is probably the most common sexual issue that affects married couples.
- Adapting and adjusting to these differences is the key.
- Good communication and attention to the marital relationship allows couples to work through this issue and find acceptable options.

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## Dealing with Different Sex Drives Cont’d

- **Note to husband’s** - Applying guilt and pressure doesn’t help your wife to feel more sexual desire.
- Remember - “A turned on woman usually turns on a man; a turned on man is often a demand to a woman.”
- It is more common for husbands to have higher sex drives than wives; however, in some couples this pattern is reversed.

Penner & Penner (1994) *Getting Your Sex Life Off to a Great Start: A Guide for Engaged and Newlywed Couples*

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## Continuum of Sexual Desire

Hyperactive (too much)	Sexual Compulsivity	+5	
			+4
-----			
Normal Range	Normal – High	+3	
	Normal – Low	+2	
	Normal – Neutral		0 to +1
-----			
Hypoactive (too little)	Low – Mild	- 1	
	Low – Moderate	- 2	
	Low – Severe	- 3	
-----			
Disgust	Sexual Aversion	- 4	
			- 5

Hart, A., Hart-Weber, C., & Taylor, D.L. (1998). *Secrets of Eve: Understanding the Mystery of Female Sexuality*.

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## Dealing with Different Sex Drives Cont'd

- Differences in male and female sexual response cycles often lead to this problem.
- Couples need to remember wives will often **not** feel intense sexual desire at the beginning of lovemaking.

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## Suggestions for Increasing Sexual Desire

- Purposefully think about marital sex more often. Build anticipation.
- Don't rush. Extend foreplay and time for arousal building.
- Get adequate rest and maintain your physical health.
- Talk to your physician. Note the side effects of medication.
- Don't use alcohol.
- Allow yourself to focus on your body's pleasurable feelings.
- Refocus yourself on the 'here and now' if you get distracted.
- Learn about your body, how it works, and what feels good.
- Become aware of your attitudes about marital sexuality and challenge negative beliefs.

Hart, A., Hart-Weber, C., & Taylor, D.L. (1998). *Secrets of Eve: Understanding the Mystery of Female Sexuality*.

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## Deal with Issues Proactively

- Learn more about marital sexuality and solutions to common sexual problems.
- Read a high quality book on sexuality together and talk about it (see recommended resources).
- Don't be afraid to talk to your physician about sexual concerns. Get a complete physical (note side effects of medications, get blood work, etc.).
- Note there are several types of common sexual problems and hindrances (see Appendix).
- Don't be afraid to seek professional Christian counseling for a sexual issue.

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## Sexual Dysfunctions And Pain Disorders

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## What is Sexual Dysfunction?

- A *recurrent pattern* of problematic sexual functioning that causes distress to the individual or the relationship.
- Sexual dysfunctions may be:
  - Lifelong versus Acquired
  - Situational or generalized
  - Due to psychological issues
  - Due to physical issues
  - Due to combined psychological and physical issues

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## Please Don't Diagnose Yourself!

- **There is tremendous variability in a couple's sexual experiences over the years!!**
- What is **normal** is to sometimes have sex 0 times in a week and sometimes 3 times in a week **AND** sometimes have intense orgasms and sometimes only mild ones **AND** sometimes the wife has an orgasm very easily and sometimes doesn't have one and is frustrated **AND** husbands may sometimes ejaculate too quickly and/or may have trouble having an erection.
- **Every** couple has **some** of these symptoms at **some time**. Having **occasional** problems is **normal**.

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## How Common is Sexual Dysfunction?

- Percentage of adult men and women who meet criteria for one or more sexual dysfunctions at any given time:
  - 43% of women
  - 31% of men

Laumann, Paik & Rosen (1999) Sexual dysfunction in the United States: Prevalence and predictors. JAMA, 281(6), 537-544.

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## Major Variables that often Underlie Sexual Dysfunction

- Age
- Physical health problems
- Mental health problems
- Marital Problems
- Current and/or chronic stressors
- Side Effects of Medications

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## What To Do If You Are Having Sexual Problems

- Talk to your physician and get a complete physical.
  - It is often a good idea to have blood work done and get a review of side effects of any medications you are taking.
- Learn more about marital sexuality and solutions to common sexual problems.
- Talk to a professional Christian counselor who can do an assessment and then help you develop a plan to address the issues.

Laumann, Paik and Rosen (1999) Sexual dysfunction in the United States: Prevalence and predictors. JAMA, 281(6), 537-544.

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## Common Sexual Dysfunctions

### Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder

- “Lack of, or significantly reduced, sexual interest/arousal.”
- Absent or reduced desire or receptivity for sexual activity.

### Male Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder

- “Persistently or recurrently deficient (or absent) sexual/erotic thoughts or fantasies and desire for sexual activity.”

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## Common Sexual Dysfunctions

### Erectile Disorder

- Persistent or recurrent inability to attain, or to maintain until completion of the sexual activity, an adequate erection.
- Used to be called impotency.

### Premature (Early) Ejaculation

- “A persistent or recurrent pattern of ejaculation occurring during partner sexual activity within approximately one minute following vaginal penetration and before the individual wishes it.”
- Men sometimes over-diagnose this in themselves because of unrealistic expectations.

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## Female Orgasmic Disorder

- “Presence of either of the following symptoms and experienced on almost all or all (approx. 75%-100%) occasions of sexual activity.”
  - Marked delay in, marked infrequency of, or absence of orgasm.
  - Markedly reduced intensity of orgasmic sensations.
- Approximately 1/3 of women report they have little to no difficulty reaching orgasm.
- Between 26-58% of women report some type of “difficulty” with reaching orgasm.
- Approximately 10% of women report never having an orgasm.
- The majority of women (between 59-67%) report that they cannot reach orgasm through sexual intercourse alone. That is, stimulation of the clitoris is also needed to bring them to orgasm.

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION. (2013). DSM-5. HART, HART-WEBER, & TAYLOR. SECRETS OF EVE. HEIMAN, 1995. EVALUATING SEXUAL DYSFUNCTIONS.

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## Sexual Pain Disorders

### Genito-Pelvic Pain/Penetration Disorder

- Persistent or recurrent difficulty for women related to penetration during sexual intercourse. This may be due to marked pain, anxiety/fear, or tensing of the muscles that prevent sexual intercourse.

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *DSM-5*

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## Discomfort versus Pain

- Discomfort during sexual intercourse is often associated with lack of lubrication, beginning penetration too quickly, vaginal infections and/or irritation (e.g. , from using a new soap).
- Sexual discomfort can usually be quickly dealt with by addressing the symptoms.
- Sexual pain disorders are conditions that are consistently and intensely painful.
- If you have recurrent pain during sex, talk with your gynecologist.

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## Issues Hindering Healthy Sexuality

APPENDIX I

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## Beliefs and Attitudes About Sex

• Where, how, and what did you learn about sex from the following?

Parents	School
Church	Society
Peers	Media

- Many of our beliefs about sex are so subtle we hardly recognize we have them.
- Your thoughts/beliefs about sex have a tremendous impact on your sex life.

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## Dealing with Negative Attitudes or Beliefs

- If your sexual life is within God's boundaries, you do not need to feel guilt, shame, or embarrassment associated with sexuality.
  - *"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."* **Genesis 2:25**
- Most feelings of guilt, shame, and embarrassment about sexuality come from misbeliefs due to myths and/or prior life experiences.

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## Counter Negative Beliefs

- "The negative things I learned about my body and sexual feelings as a child no longer apply to me as a married adult."
- "God created lovemaking and orgasms for my enjoyment."
- "There is nothing sinful or unnatural about sex. I can rejoice in my body and its sexual feelings." They are a gift from God.
- God designed sexuality to be a beautiful expression of my love for my spouse. I do not have to feel guilty and shameful about living out God's design for my marriage.

Rosenau (1994) *A Celebration of Sex: A Guide to Enjoying God's Gift of Married Sexual Pleasure*

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## Body Image & Sexuality

•With age, both husbands and wives will experience significant physical changes in their bodies (after pregnancy, etc.).

•Husbands: it is important to not hold and push unrealistic expectations for your wife's body.

•Remember your body is changing too.

•When women feel pressured sexually, their level of sexual desire goes down --**not up!!**

•How you feel about your physical health and your body has a large impact on how sexual you feel and how comfortable you will be in opening yourself up to your spouse.

•Work hard at stopping yourself from comparing your body to others.

•Comparison shuts down sexual desire.

## Dealing with the Effects of Sexual Abuse

•Sexual abuse experiences can significantly affect one's ability to enjoy Godly, healthy sexuality.

•You **CAN** heal!!

•Professional Christian counseling is highly recommended to deal with both the sexual abuse and marital sexuality.

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## Dealing with Sexual Temptation #1

•It is important to realize that sexual temptation for men does not stop simply because they are married.

•Just because your husband is tempted doesn't mean he isn't happily married.

•It is important to realize sexual temptation for women often occurs due to emotional fantasy, loneliness, and unmet relational needs.

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## Dealing with Sexual Temptation #2

•When you have impure sexual thoughts or memories, the most effective way to deal with them is to **redirect your thinking**.

•Trying to suppress unwanted thoughts actually increases the frequency and intensity of the thoughts. The secret is to **shift focus** and not dwell on the unwanted thoughts.

• **Philippians 4:8**, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true... honest... just... pure... lovely... good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things."

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## Dealing with Sexual Temptation #3

•While it can be helpful at times to tell your spouse you are struggling with sexual temptation, generally speaking, it is unwise to share the specific content of the sexual temptation.

•Both husbands and wives are encouraged to seek out spiritual and personal accountability partners in order to deal with sexual temptation.

•If you are struggling with sexual impurity, contact your elder about going through the Apostolic Christian Way of Purity program.

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## FAMILY PLANNING

APPENDIX J

ACCES

## Family Planning

Issues related to fertility and family planning are private and should not be shared with others.

1. God plans for married couples to bear children. (*Genesis 1:28; 1 Timothy 5:14*)
2. *1 Corinthians 7:1-7* provides an example of temporary sexual abstinence that can be used as a natural family-planning method.
3. Remember there are many ways to express love in addition to sexual intercourse. This requires discipline and self control (*1 Thessalonians 4:4*).

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## Family Planning Cont'd

4. For any decision about fertility and family planning, couples are encouraged to prayerfully consider the Word, seek counsel, and come to a mutual peace together.
5. Couples are strongly cautioned against using any method of family planning that is abortive in nature (i.e., that ends a pregnancy after conception has occurred).
6. If you have questions or difficulties regarding this topic, counsel with your elder.

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## Sharing Issues With Sexual History

APPENDIX K

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## Sharing Issues from your Sexual History

- Be prayerful, cautious, and seek counsel before sharing issues from your sexual history.
- At times, one or both of the individuals in a couple may have current or past issues that can potentially affect their sexual relationship in marriage.
- These issues can include things like having a history of sexual abuse, having had an abortion(s), having had premarital sexual experiences, and/or having struggled with pornography, etc.

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## Sharing Issues Cont'd

- Sometimes it is difficult to know what to share with your spouse and what to consider as history that is "passed away" (*2 Corinthians 5:17-20*).
- Couples are encouraged to counsel with their elder about what they share in order to prevent unnecessary hurt in their relationship.
- This is because while sometimes we need to share certain things, other times we need to let things remain in the past.

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## Sharing Issues Cont'd

- Seek counsel about sharing issues with your spouse when the issues:
  - Are currently present or are part of an ongoing struggle.
  - Hinder your relationship with God.
  - Hinder your relationship with your spouse.
  - Hinder your ability to live out God's plan for your life.

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## Healthy Sexuality For Children

APPENDIX L

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## Passing on Godly, Healthy Sexuality to Your Children

- Parents should teach their children about sexuality, in developmentally appropriate pieces, from little on up.
- Children need to see their parents being emotionally affectionate and physically close (i.e., hugging).
- Children should not see their parents engaging in sexual behaviors that should be private.
- Protect your privacy. Make sure your bedroom door has a lock on it.

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## Books on Teaching your Children about Godly, Healthy Sexuality

- Jones, S., & Jones, B. (2007). How & When to Tell Your Kids about Sex. Revised. Nav Press.
  - There are 4 additional books that go with this book call the God's design for Sex Series.
  - Each book is written for children of various ages/developmental stages and is designed for parents and children to read the books together.

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