

Struggles in the Marriage Bed

A. Differences in Sexual Desire (Generally speaking)

- We must remember the marriage bed is a gift from God, created by God. We glorify Him when we cultivate sexual desire for our husband and when we welcome his sexual desires for us!
- 1 Corinthians 7:3-5
- Sex within marriage is not an option! It is part of our God-given responsibility to one another.
- 38% of women said they felt like they weren't having sex often enough!!!
 - Have an honest talk with your husband and remember 1 Corinthians 16:14! *Let all that you do be done in love.*
 - Ask your husband if there is anything you have done to contribute to his lack of interest. (not respecting him, being controlling or critical of him?)
- SBTS student wife desires

B. Our Personal Sinfulness

- Could you be making your marriage bed an idol? Or your husband an idol?
- Are you using the marriage bed as a weapon?
- Are you manipulating your husband with your marriage bed to get things you want?
- What are the sinful tendencies you have concerning the marriage bed?

C. Not Viewing the Marriage Bed as a Gift

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| ▪ Intimate Oneness | Genesis 2:24 |
| ▪ Comfort | Genesis 24:67 |
| ▪ Creation of Life | Genesis 1:28 |
| ▪ Knowledge | cf. Genesis 4:1 |
| ▪ Play and Pleasure | Song 2:8-17; 4:1-16 |
| ▪ Avoiding Temptation | 1 Cor. 7:2-5 |

D. Having a Perverted Understanding of the Marriage Bed

- What did you hear about the marriage bed from parents, teachers, others that may have negatively impacted your view of the marriage bed?
- How does your understanding of sexual intimacy in the marriage bed need to be untwisted as compared to that of Scripture?

E. Past Sexual Struggles

- Pornography (20-30% for women)
- Masturbation / Lust

(1 Cor. 6:18)— *Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.*

- Sexual Victimization
 - God hates sexual abuse and is deeply grieved over what was done to you.
 - In the OT, serious sexual crimes were punishable by death (Deut. 22:22, Lev. 18:29)
 - Some offenders were literally "cut off" as in Deut. 25:11-12, where a woman's hand was to be cut off if she seized the genitals of a man who was not her husband.
 - God had very clear boundaries concerning sex and deadly consequences for those who violated them.

- The enemy wants to keep you frozen in your hurt. He seeks to devour you with his lies (1 Peter 5:8) but you must stand firm against the schemes of the enemy and resist his lies (2 Cor.2:11; Eph. 4:27; 6:11)
 - God wants to heal you (Matt. 14:36)
 - God is trustworthy and safe
 - You are a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and He will make all things new. Your marriage bed CAN be redeemed!
- Sexual Promiscuity
 - Whenever sin is kept in the dark the enemy has power; when it is brought into the light, there is healing.
 - Very few women go into marriage without a past.
 - How does a woman get over the guilt of her past?

Confession, Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness

- Sexual sin cuts deep because it distorts and defiles God's intended picture of his intimate relationship with us as his children through our union with Christ.
- (1 John 1:9) *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
 - Ask God to sever that tie and to remove it forever.
 - If you are being assaulted in your mind by those thoughts or pictures from your past and you know you have asked for forgiveness, then those thoughts aren't from God.
 - The enemy is throwing your past in your pathway. Ask the Lord to protect you from the enemy and to put a hedge of protection around you. Ask for prayer support from sisters in Christ!!!
- (Psalm 69:5) *You know my folly, O God, my guilt is not hidden from you.*
- (Hebrews 10:22-23) *Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

2. Replacing Guilt with Proper Thinking

- (Philippians 4:8) *Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*
- (Romans 12:2) *Do not be conformed to this world, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of worship.*
 - Remember the finished work of Christ on the cross is sufficient to cover even the vilest of sexual sin. God is fully aware of the sins of our past, present, and future when he chose to save us (cf. Ps. 139:16).

3. Guilt is no Longer Necessary

- (Isaiah 1:18) *Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be a white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*
- (Psalm 103:2) *As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*
- (Rom. 8:1) *Therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
- (Isaiah 43:25) *I, even I, am he who blots out your transgression, for my own namesake, and remembers your sins no more.*
- (Isaiah 38:17) *Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.*
- Tell story of wife with years of hidden sexual sin in the marriage....white as snow!!!

F. Poor body image

- Allow your husband to be your mirror!
- This inhibits us as a lover.

Impact of Pornography (and Masturbation) on the Wife

- Background
 - Consuming porn is most prevalent with men than women but recent stats reveal a growing trend in women pursuing porn (25-30%)
 - In some sense, impacts much in the same way as physical adultery
- Spiritual Dynamics within the Wife
 - Relationship with God—range of questions and emotions
 - Why me?!? Why him?!?
 - Pull away from God out of anger, confusion, and bitterness
 - Relationship with Self
 - Questions beauty, body image, ability to satisfy husband, and other insecurities
 - Questions adequacy as a wife, what she can/should have done differently
 - Relationship with Husband
 - Sense of betrayal, distrust due to adultery of the heart
 - Tend to wonder if husband is still engaged in porn—wants to ask but doesn't want to ask because afraid of the answer—the wife should not be main source of accountability.
 - Wants him to get help
 - May sin against husband in the course of dealing with her husband's struggles
 - Bitterness and anger, withdrawal and coldness
 - Punish by withholding sexual intimacy
- How does the Gospel Apply?
 - For the Wife
 - May be confronted for the first time with her sinfulness through her husband's sinfulness—this will shake her understanding of her relationship with God and will hinder her perspective and ability to deal with her husband in a redemptive manner.
 - The wife is the primary person God can use to bring about change in her husband and redemption in their marriage. She will have to move from a position of self-protection by taking steps of faith to love her husband like Christ. It is difficult to minister to one's husband when defensive, when manipulating with guilt and bitterness, or when frozen by a false sense of shame and insecurities.