

SE051808
AFTER HAPPILY EVER
3. Sex

I think every married couple, no matter man or woman or how long they've been married WANTS a fulfilling sex life.

Like this one old couple who were at an old coffee shop one night and the husband leaned over and asked his wife, "Do you remember that time 50 years ago we went behind this very building where we leaned against the back fence and we... you know?"
"Yes," she says, "I remember it well."

The old guy got a twinkle in his eye and said, "How about we take a stroll around back do it again for old time's sake?"
"Oh Charlie, you old devil, that sounds like a crazy, but good idea!"

Now, a police officer was having coffee and happened to overhear this conversation and chuckling to himself, he thought:
"I've got to see these two old-timers just to keep an eye on them so there's no trouble." So he follows them.

The elderly couple walked out slowly, leaning on each other and aided by their canes. Finally, they got to the back of the building and sure enough, the old man made his move and the lady leaned against the fence. The policeman was about to turn away, when suddenly it turned into the most unexpected display of marital fireworks the policeman had ever seen. This went on for many minutes with loud shouts and screaming.

Finally, they both collapsed on the ground. The policeman was amazed. He thought how all these years he had underestimated every senior citizen he'd ever met. How did they keep the passion alive so long? After giving them a chance to pull themselves together, the policeman decided, "I've got to ask them what their secret is."

So, as the couple passes, he says to them,
"Excuse me, but I have to admit, I just saw that, and I'm wondering what the secret is to keeping that kind of passion in your relationship."

Shaking, the old man was barely able to reply,
"Fifty years ago, that wasn't an electric fence."

That's one way to keep the passion alive! *

But in courtship, especially for Christian couples, it seems that keeping the passion alive will be the LEAST of your problems. That's because couples who take God's timeless wisdom seriously are often too busy trying NOT to have sex to worry about the quality and quantity of sexual activity AFTER happily ever after.

- So how is it that with those high expectations, it's almost universal that in just few years, sometimes even weeks AFTER happily ever, that quality and quantity of sex becomes a real issue?
- Why sexual problems, when we learned last week that God created us sexual beings, made us in his image, MALE and FEMALE? I mean the first thing we learn from scripture is that sex is good and spiritual. Here's the biblical formula for marriage:
 - o "A man shall be united with his wife and the two will become one flesh. The two were naked and not ashamed." (Gen 2:24, 25)

There's something so wonderful in this oneness out of sexual duality that Paul is at a loss for words to explain it. "This is a profound mystery" he says. What we can say for sure is that sex is too intense and vulnerable to NOT be contained inside the firm boundaries of marriage.

- "marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure." (Heb 13:4)

It doesn't take a genius to realize how many ways we've invented to mess this up; ways which bring deep, deep wounds. But even for couples without such wounds, sex still can be a challenge. Why? Well, there's the stain of sin, which mars God's good design. And every couple finds out sooner or later, that men and women are wired differently when it comes to sex. We're not just people with the same thought processes about sex who happen to have different but nicely matching body parts.

Therefore, the most practical instruction in the Bible about sex encourages selfless understanding and giving, to overcome our differences:

- 1 Cor 7:2-5 Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.
 - o Which means, in a sex saturated culture, protecting the sacredness of sex and our own souls means it's better to be married with a healthy sexual outlet than to try and fight the culture and lose the battle.
- The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.
 - o This is saying that sex is not an add on to a marriage for extra credit! It's a fundamental part of your covenant. In some sense you might say sex defines marriage because it's the one thing you don't do with anyone else.
- The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.
 - o People who think Paul is some kind of misogynist should take note that that Paul here makes the first statement of sexual equality in the history of the human race! He makes no distinction for gender, both women AND men cede partial control of their bodies to their spouse equally. Wow! If you have issue with this kind of mutual submission, then you have issue with everything Jesus taught us about fulfillment: You do not seek your life to find it, you give UP your life to find it.

- Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent
 - o When it comes to sex, Paul is saying you are your spouse's only hope at a happy sex life. And sex is part of the expression of the image of God in them. Deprive them and what are you doing? You are in one sense throwing them to the wolves of an immoral culture. Paul makes the direct connection between sexual fulfillment IN marriage and a decrease in sexual temptation outside of marriage.
 - o Finally note that Paul makes no nod toward gender here. You may assume that he's leaning toward male sensibilities, but did you know that in Roman culture in the 1st century it was understood that **women** were the drivers of sexual lust and couldn't be trusted alone with the opposite sex? It's true. In our culture, it's opposite. So the command in the Bible makes no gender distinction, it's simply this:
 - don't deny sex from the other.

Now, this is such critical wisdom we need to spend the rest of our time unpacking it. Let's talk to women first:

FOR HIM SEX CHANGES EVERYTHING

Like all the weeks in this series, we're going to build off of general male/female differences, and the average married man probably wants more sex with his wife than he gets. According to Jeff and Shaunti Feldman and their survey of over 1000 men and women, 3 out of every 4 men (75%) said they wanted more and better sex than their wives.

Which actually means a sizable minority, one in four women, are pining for more. That's not an insignificant group. For those couples, I'd recommend a couple books,

- The Gift of Sex , Clifford and Joyce Penner
- A Celebration of Sex by Douglas Rosenau

But for today, let's speak to the majority situation where many husbands want more sex than they're getting. This is not a shock to most women who have been giggling about men's obsession with sex since Junior high. As wives, what you may not realize is that your non-synchronized sex lives might be growing into a crisis.

You might say, "well, my husband actually stopped asking for sex a while back." That might be a sign of slowing down with age and synchronizing your desires, OR it might be a sign that he's withdrawing or growing resentful or worse, starting not to care because he's too wounded to bring it up. *

Or maybe you're not understanding what the big deal is. It's a simple, primal urge that he really should be able to do without. It's not like food! He won't die without it. And besides, a lot of other primary needs get in the way... like sleep and the late show.

Well here's the insight that might surprise some women. While popular opinion says that men are just one giant sex gland, animalistic and sex is just a physical release... the stats on this say this impression is wrong – dead wrong. Here's the truth:

sex for most men is deeply attached to their emotional well being and making love to his wife: assures him, builds his confidence, salves his loneliness, and delights his soul in ways that mere sexual release cannot produce.

Did you hear that? At a most basic level, your husband wants to be wanted. He wants to be **desired**. He wants his wife not only to “put up with sex”, but to actually desire him sexually. It's a core need in a man. And if he doesn't feel it, he feels wounded.

Check this out: The following scenario was put in front of men: you are sexually gratified continually... now how important is it to you to ALSO feel wanted and desired by your wife?:

- 66% said feeling wanted and desired is VERY important
- 31% said important
- Less than 3% said it didn't matter so long as there was enough frequency.

Are you hearing this? 97% of men said getting enough sex wasn't enough. Some of you have said, “well, if it's that important, he should ask more.” But you see, this is why he stops asking! He doesn't want to “wear you down”. He wants to feel wanted. If he succeeds in “wearing you down”, he doesn't get what he REALLY wants.

See, another question was asked: Imagine you get all the sex you want, but it's obligatory, and she is not satisfied or she just wants to meet your need... will you be satisfied? Guess how many one track mind, sex obsessed men, said that would OK? 25%. The vast majority said they would feel empty if their wife wasn't engaged or satisfied.

Those that WOULD take sex on those terms often say it's only so they wouldn't be as tempted to have an affair.

Maybe you need a change in view, from thinking that your husband's sexual craving is at best a simple desire he should just be able turn off, or at worst a insensitive demand... to thinking that it is, in fact, an expression of deep emotional need.

Doesn't that change things? Imagine that your husband decided that your need for communication and emotional intimacy was kinda dumb and immature. I mean he knows it's there, but he decides that you don't need it to live and you should just get over it and understand that he has other things to do than listen or talk to you. Think of how wounding that would be.

Women, some men in this room feel THAT wounded, emotionally right now. As legitimately wounded as you would feel, that's how he feels when he's rebuffed time after time. Rejected. Depressed. Because he wants to feel wanted.

So what can you do? As we discovered, obligatory sex, won't cut it.

- **HEAR HIS HEART.** The next time he floats a trial balloon to test the waters, hear the heart behind it. Don't hear, "I'm an animal and I have a physical need, please meet it." Everyone understands how demeaning that would be. But 97% of men don't feel that way. Honestly, if orgasm was all it was, they could just masturbate... but they don't WANT to... what they WANT is intimacy with you! You desiring him makes him feel like a champion. You're not satisfying his body so much as feeding his soul.
- **GET INVOLVED.** Sometimes, you make the first move. Here's the word: seduce him. (Ruth) This touches that, "does she desire me" button he has that cuts so close to his sense of worth.
- **MAKE SEX A PRIORITY.** If you were a Star Trek fan, you might remember the episode where Data the robot gets a human girlfriend. Data is a perfect boyfriend, but soon she's not happy. She kisses him at one point and asks, what were you thinking about, right then? And Data replies, I was charting the path through the nebula, recalculating the engines output, factoring how much pressure to apply to your lips, redoing the matrix for... she stopped him realizing at that moment why this wasn't going to work. She could never be his priority. He had too many things on his computer mind.
 - o Women, this is how men often feel about you... like they only get a tiny, little space in your spaghetti brains. Kids, work, ministry, laundry, will we even make the top 10? We know you need to be thinking about sex to be ready for it, yet the fact that you don't prioritize brain space for it says "I'M not a priority to her."
 - o One woman finally got this and wrote: I felt that my day was all about need meeting for my husband and at the end of the day I was done need meeting. Then God prompted me, "are the needs you meet for your husband really for him?" I realized that all the things that occupied my brain were things I prioritized for me, not him. If the kids weren't primped, he didn't complain. If the kitchen floor wasn't mopped, he'd do it. I soon realized I was saying "no" the one thing he asked of me. It was MY plan for the day that got priority and this was more about me than him.
 - o I understand the difficulty for your integrated brains to add one more "non-essential" thing. But this one thing connects to everything else for him. It opens up wells of emotion and response in him that you might have been craving. And all it takes from you really to start, is to have compassion and understand the way he's wired.

HER NO DOESN'T MEAN YOU

So now let's turn our attention to the men. Men I want you to do two things that you're really good at. Think Clearly. Think about Sex. Now I want you do something you're not any good at, do these two things at the same time. Here's the revelation, are you ready?

Her “no” doesn’t mean you.

No matter how much we hear about women being different, men still grow up thinking women are just like us. Inside, we can’t believe that anyone could feel differently about sex than us, it’s powerful and fun and free and who would not want more free fun? I mean, we know how we’re wired, our wives just have to show a little leg and man! We’re putty! How can anyone not feel this way about sex?

So when we initiate and they can take it our leave it, we go to a bad place: “I’m repulsive.” “I’m not a priority.” “I’m undesirable.” “She doesn’t care.” And men, when you’re there, you are in the danger zone. One man in this place wrote:

She doesn’t understand, she thinks I’m an animal... But I don’t want simple physical release. I need to be intimate – sex is just the vehicle. I need intimacy, caring, to know I’m wanted and important. The first available woman, who thinks I’m important, desirable, who wants to share intimacy – I feel, right now, I would have no restraint against such a woman.

That guy is in the danger zone because he has taken a “no to sex” to mean “no to me”. The thing is, if he could see his wife’s heart, he would know, it’s NOT about him at all. What he’s taking as deep-hearted rejection is not meant to be. When polled 75% of women said their lower sexual desire has nothing to do with their husbands desirability or general “studliness” at all.

The top three reasons given by women themselves were:

- Lower sex drive 60%
- Too tired or stressed 60%
- Hard to transition 48%

There is something to the physiology. Testosterone is an initiating sexual hormone and women simply have less of it coursing through their veins. That doesn’t mean they can’t **enjoy** sex. There are other receptive sex hormones which allow for vivid response in females... In fact, they’re the only female animal on earth that can be sexually responsive always as opposed to once a year. But what this physiological reality means is two things:

- They’re not wired to initiate sex as much as you
- They’re more susceptible to distractions to sex.
 - o So one more time: it’s NOT ABOUT YOU!

Now men, the movies and increasingly available porn has polluted our minds. We are lead to think that all women would be unrestrained bimbos if we were just Tom Cruise or if they stopped being prudes. But that’s a lie. On surveys, 82% of women would change that if they could. They WANT to want you, they just don’t physically feel it like you do.

A wife and husband once had this conversation:

- SHE: There isn’t one thing about your body that makes me sexually attracted to you...

- HE: I thought I was sexy to you and good looking... you said so before!
- SHE: You are, but that has nothing to do with why I want to have sex with you.
- HE: But, I... how?
- SHE: Babe, look, I like you and I like sex when we're having it, but it's not like my body is lusting after yours.
- HE: But what about me in my black leather jacket? You always come up to me and growl. Are you saying?
- SHE: Nope, even you in the leather jacket. You look hot, but I'm not sexually aroused one bit.

So what this means, I know you've heard this before, but sex starts in her heart. You can desire sex after you fought in the morning. The fight actually might make it better, make you feel like you can resolve something to feel close again. She can't do that. Why not? She's too integrated for that. It all touches. She has to feel a total connection with you. And she has to have mental space to feel that connection.

So how do you help foster sexual intimacy? In short everything we discussed the last two weeks on love and communication. Men, I bet you didn't know we've already had 2 weeks on sex*! Because it all connects. In case you weren't here:

- **PAY ATTENTION.** Women were candid about what helps open the sex window.
 - o 73% said emotional attention helps.
 - o 71% said little serving gestures or flirtation.
 - o 67% said listening or talking together.
- **GIVE CHASE.** Women need the pursuit, affirmation of beauty because God made them with a beauty to reveal. They are fighting a culture that tells them constantly what's wrong with them physically. You have to be her champion and fight that battle for her. She's beautiful. Tell her. She needs to feel attractive to feel sexual.
- **GIVE WARNING.** Again a nod to spaghetti brains... it's 90% mental with her, 10% physical. A little hint during the day, plants the thot in her mind, plugs in her iron so it can be hot later on.
- **NON SEXUAL TOUCHING.** If you hope your wife heard that you are not an animal and that sex touches a deep need in you, your wife is now hoping that you hear that if every time you make a move towards her, it's to have sex, it will *feel* like pure selfish release no matter how much you know it's not. So you have to convince her that you can and will put sexual release on hold for her. Her body is yours after all. What does IT want?
- **TALK ABOUT RESPONSE.** In the 21% of women where their man had something to do with their lower sexual interest, they honestly shared a brutal truth: They were hesitant because they did not anticipate pleasure. This is a difficult subject, but someone has to be willing to talk about it. And it's as simple as a question: do you experience full sexual response (Song of Solomon)? She

might be protecting your feelings, so if she isn't the kind to tell you what works and what doesn't, you have to ask and then act accordingly. Imagine if you "went there" sexually but never "got there". It would be de-motivating.

Men some days, she's wanting to get started, but you have to jump start it. And it will take more than your black leather jacket, or flashing your awesome pecks at bedtime. In fact, that might work against you, just FYI. It will take you being a **minister** to her. If she can count on you to do that, you will be able to count on her too.