

GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEXUALITY

*“For by Him all things were created,
both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible...
all things have been created by Him and for Him.”*

Col. 1:16 NASB

I. Marriage is ordained by God.

- A. To represent the mystical union between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:30-32)
- B. To be honored by all men as an institution created by God

“Marriage should be honored by all...”

Heb. 13:4a

C. To be the relationship in which love is expressed through the sexual union

II. God's design for sexuality is revealed in His Word.

A. Sex is created by God to be experienced *only* within the marriage relationship.
(Heb. 13:4)

1. It is designed to be the expression of the “one flesh” relationship.

a. The perfect design of God is that the husband and wife become one flesh,
which encompasses the mind, the spirit, the emotions, the will and the body.

*“...a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,
and they will become one flesh.”*

Gen. 2:24

b. The perfect plan of God is to experience sex as a mutually satisfying and
pleasurable *gift* from Him. (1 Cor. 7:3-5; Prov. 5:18,19; Song of Songs)

1) Song of Songs makes it clear that God desires the husband and wife to
delight in each other's bodies, to desire sex and to be passionate.

2) Sex is designed by God to be a deep communication of the mind and
body.

c. He created sex to be an expression of holiness and goodness. (Song of Songs)

2. It is designed to bring forth children. (Gen. 1:28)

3. It is designed to glorify Him. (Col. 3:17)

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*“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God.”*

1 Cor. 10:31

B. Sex is to be subject to

1. the control of the Holy Spirit.
2. the description of love set forth in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8.

*“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love,
I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

*And if I have the gift of prophecy,
and know all mysteries and all knowledge;
and if I have all faith, as to remove mountains, but do not have love,
I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor,
and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love,
it profits me nothing.*

*Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous;
love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly;
it does not seek its own, is not provoked,
does not take into account a wrong suffered,
does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...”*

1 Cor. 13:1-8a NASB

3. the definitions of love from the New Testament Greek words.
 - a. *Agape* is an unconditional and irrevocable love, an unselfish love that is ready to serve. This love is not based on worth and performance, but on God's unconditional and unwavering love. This love is the model for Christian relationships and the word used when God commands us to love one another in John 15:12. It is an act of the will and not emotion, which demands an exercise of the whole person. This definition of love must to be demonstrated in relation to a spouse or a dating partner, if you are single.

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

John 15:12

- b. *Phileo* is a brotherly love and tender affection. It includes concern, care and hospitality, a love that befriends, a love that is based on common interests. This definition of love should characterize friendship, marriage and dating relationships.

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***“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth
so that you have sincere love for your brothers,
love one another deeply, from the heart.”***

1 Pet. 1:22

God has designed sex to be the physical expression in marriage of agape and phileo love, not merely the fulfilling of physical desires. A loving sexual relationship should not only be physically pleasurable and satisfying but also emotionally and spiritually fulfilling. (Prov. 5:18,19)

***“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.
Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.
Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.
Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”***

Rom. 12:9-12

***“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.
Everyone who loves has been born of God
and knows God.
Whoever does not love does not know God,
because God is love.”***

1 John 4:7,8

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“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Now as the church submits to Christ,

so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

and to present her to himself as a radiant church,

without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church --

for we are members of his body.

‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’

This is a profound mystery -- but I am talking about Christ and the church.

However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

Eph. 5:22-33

Marriage is instituted by God to reflect Christ’s union with His bride, the Church. It is a covenant relationship through which the Lord desires to model unity and permanence. The sexual relationship is one aspect of the oneness, which God planned for marriage.

- I. God has designed the husband and the wife to both give and to receive from one another in the sex act.
 - A. Rights to your body are given to your spouse in marriage.

“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.”

1 Cor. 7:4a

- 1. Neither partner should dominate or control the other in the sexual relationship.
- 2. Both partners should be willing to initiate the sex act.
- 3. Both spouses should be willing to introduce new ways of sexually and romantically relating in accordance with biblical principles.
- 4. There should be submission to one another. Learn to give at certain times, such as
 - a. realizing that on occasion, your spouse may have a good reason for not having sex; being sensitive to your spouse by denying your own desires as an act of love.

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- b. giving to your spouse sexually when you are not “in the mood,” you have a headache or you are tired. Offer your body as a living sacrifice if sexual desire is not present. (Rom. 12:1,2)

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Eph. 5:21

5. You should consider your spouse more important than yourself.
6. You are to emphasize giving to your spouse rather than receiving for selfish purposes. Selfishness is the enemy of love.

***“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,
but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”***

Phil. 2:3

- II. Sex is designed by God to be a *regular* and an *ongoing* part of the marriage.
 - A. Frequency should be based on the couple’s desires.
 - B. Frequency should not be determined by influences outside the marriage, such as what others are doing.
- III. Sex in the marriage is ordained by God to include specific controls.
 - A. It must not be controlled by lust, which is a craving, a greediness or a demand for self; a demand for self-gratification. (Rom. 13:14)
 - B. Marriage partners are commanded by God to not deny one another. (1 Cor. 7:5a)
 - C. Partners may abstain from sex to pray, but only by mutual agreement and only for a limited time, so they will not be tempted by Satan. (1 Cor. 7:5)
 - D. Partners must remain sexually faithful to each other until death parts them. (Ex. 20:14; Heb. 13:4; Mark 10:8,9)
- IV. God created the male and female. (Mark 10:6) The following lists of sexual differences and preferences between men and women are generalizations, which will not be true in all cases. This list may lend insight into attitudes and behaviors of the male and female.
 - A. **Often**, a man
 1. is more easily aroused by sight and fragrance than a woman is.

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2. has sexual desires that are not affected by the emotional state of the marriage.
3. is more focused on the physical aspect of the sex act.
4. will be ready to climax sooner than she is. Therefore,
 - a. a man under control of the Holy Spirit needs to wait for his wife's readiness.
 - b. a man needs to be unselfish and to develop a sensitivity toward how his wife is responding to his touch.
5. is difficult to distract during foreplay and the physical act.
6. is not desirous of sharing in the "afterglow" by caressing and verbal affection.
7. will usually reach a climax during the sex act.
8. has desires that are not cyclical.
9. is not romantically inclined.

B. Often, a woman

1. has sexual desire that is cyclical and may be affected by her hormonal changes.
2. has sexual desire or a lack of desire, which is affected by the character of her husband and the emotional state of the marriage.
 - a. If her marriage is not emotionally satisfying, her desire for sex may be adversely affected.
 - b. If she is treated lovingly, tenderly and sensitively on a consistent basis, she will usually have greater sexual desire.
3. takes a longer time to arouse than a man; thus the foreplay is usually important to her.
4. can be easily distracted during foreplay and during the act.
5. may not be consistent in reaching a climax.
 - a. Some women reach an orgasm during the act of intercourse.
 - b. Some women climax through external stimulation of the clitoris.

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- c. Some women do not have orgasms; others rarely have them.
- 6. is romantic; desires caressing and verbal affection after the sex act.
- 7. may have a decline in sexual desire when radical hormonal changes take place, such as in pregnancy and in menopause. Consult a physician in such cases.

Remember these lists are generalizations. It is not uncommon to encounter both men and women who withdraw physically from their spouses and do not desire them sexually. In many cases, lack of desire and withdrawal are the results of sinful attitudes, which have compounded in both mates to the point that one spouse is alienated by the other. Both need to deal with their sinful initiatives and responses. Hopefully, by learning to submit to the scriptural principles outlined in these studies, both will regularly give and receive in a loving sexual union.

Some men may be inhibited by physical problems such as impotency or an inability to sustain an erection. It is common for women to not have orgasms. Either may have a consistent lack of desire for sex when sinful attitudes have *not* been a problem or after they have been dealt with biblically. In such situations, it is highly recommended that a physician be consulted. A greater understanding of techniques may also be very helpful.

“For the love of Christ controls us...that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf...Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”
2 Cor. 5:14,15,17 NASB

The wife should be willing to give herself to her husband: emotionally, spiritually and physically, even when his desire may be far greater than hers. The husband must learn to delay his own climax to tenderly stroke and caress his wife’s breasts, clitoris and other areas of her body that arouse her sexually. He should understand that the clitoris is designed by God to be the most sensitive area of sexual stimulation on a woman’s body. Clitoral stimulation alone can produce a climax, and it can also be the precursor to a vaginal orgasm. It also can produce excitement and satisfaction if she is unable to reach a climax.

God has designed the sexual union to be a ministry of love to one another. To enhance that union, each must be willing to communicate what is desired in the relationship and try to accommodate the godly desires of the mate, understanding that as each gives to the other, each receives in return. Try ministering to your spouse by being creative and romantic in your approach to some of your times together, encouraging each other with new ideas. Consider including prayer as part of the sexual relationship, which enhances spiritual oneness. Expressions of thanksgiving to God and to each other are a way of joyfully culminating the sexual experience, as the couple shares in the “afterglow.” A mutually open, selfless giving and receiving create a passionate time of lovemaking! (Mark 10:6-9)

BARRIERS TO A GOD GLORIFYING SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders
and the sin that so easily entangles,
and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”
Heb. 12:1*

- I. There are many sinful attitudes and behaviors, which may be barriers to creating a sexual relationship, which is loving, tender, mutually satisfying and promotes oneness.
 - A. Unbiblical views of sexuality
 1. Resulting from influences such as
 - a. society and its values
 - b. destructive past experiences: rape, incest, molestation, homosexuality, masturbation, fornication, adultery, sexual fantasies, pornography
 - c. not being free from fears, bitterness and/or guilt
 2. Not understanding God’s view of sexuality
 - a. Not believing that sex is designed by God as a means of communicating love to one another (Song of Songs)
 - b. Not believing that Christ is involved in the sexual aspects of your life (Heb. 13:5b,6a)
 - 1) He is *always* present because He lives within your body. (1 Cor. 6:19)

*“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely,
O LORD You hem me in -- behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.
Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?”
Ps. 139:1-7*

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- 2) He wants you to call upon His help and resources, which are *always* available. (Ps. 50:15, 2 Cor. 12:9) See *God's Resources for the Controller, The Controllers*.
 - c. Not believing that God has designed sex to be pleasurable (Song of Songs)
 - d. Viewing God's design for sex as "dirty," ungodly or shameful
 - e. Separating sex from God's commands to love and to consider your spouse as more important than yourself (John 13:35; Phil. 2:3)
- B. Sinful emotional climate
1. Sexual problems are usually a *manifestation* of emotional/spiritual problems in a marriage.
 2. The sexual relationship is often a barometer of the entire marriage relationship.
 3. Sexual problems are often the *result* of not lovingly relating to one another throughout each day. (Col. 3:12-17)
- C. Ignorance of techniques for fulfillment
- D. Physical problems
- E. Unresolved sin
1. Pride, the root cause of all sin, is manifested in two ways as it affects your sexuality.
 - a. Unbelief in God
 - 1) Not believing that His design for sexuality is sufficient for fulfillment
 - 2) Not believing that His Word and His power are great enough to overcome the barriers to a godly sexual relationship (Phil. 4:13,19)
 - 3) Not believing that when faced with a disengaged or an uncaring, insensitive spouse that God's grace will be sufficient for the unjustly treated, as you entrust yourself to Him (2 Cor. 12:9; 1 Pet. 2:19-23)
 - b. Selfishness
 - 1) will create a self-orientation that causes further sin.
 - 2) can be manifested in controlling, manipulative attitudes/behaviors.

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- 3) will block all that God intended the sexual relationship to be.
2. Pride (a demand to control) often produces fear (a loss or threatened loss of control), which creates difficulties in the sexual relationship. See *Root Cause of All Sin* diagram, CTO.
 - a. Fear of rejection usually leads to making attempts to regain control of your world. Therefore, you may
 - 1) try to satisfy your desire for acceptance through the sex act.
 - 2) attempt to build your ego/self-esteem through the sex act, which often leads to insatiable or unreasonable demands.
 - 3) equate an occasional denial from your spouse with personal rejection.
 - a) become demanding; trying to convince your mate of what you want
 - b) believe that the only way you or your mate can express love is through the sex act
 - b. Fear of rejection can produce other controlling/manipulative behaviors and attitudes, which are used in an attempt to regain control of your world. They include:
 - 1) attempting to control through “guilt trips.”
 - 2) withdrawing emotionally, physically and/or sexually
 - 3) pouting and whining to try to get your way.
 - 4) trying to punish by withholding sex; repaying evil with evil.
(1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Pet. 3:9)
 - 5) bargaining; bribing.
 - 6) intimidating; threatening.
3. Prideful attitudes and/or fear of being vulnerable can lead to trying to maintain or regain control of your world by
 - 1) not desiring to give or receive the physical expression of love from your spouse.
 - 2) viewing sex as invasion of your “personal territory.”

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- 3) not wanting to give up control of your body and its responses to your spouse.
- 4) isolating yourself from your spouse
 - a) through emotional, spiritual or sexual withdrawal.
 - b) by a lack of willingness to expose your body to your mate.
 - c) by turning to masturbation to satisfy yourself and therefore, rejecting God's provision in your spouse. (1 Cor. 7:4)
 - d) by nurturing a self-sufficient attitude which implies, "I don't need you!"
 - e) by not initiating sex or communicating about the sexual relationship because of pride, risk of failure, the potential of hurt or rejection.

***"There is no fear in love.
But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.
The one who fears is not made perfect in love."***

1 John 4:18

4. Unforgiveness can often have a destructive impact on the sexual relationship. (Heb. 12:15)
5. Guilt that has not been dealt with biblically can lead to problems in the marriage bed. (Ps. 32:1-5)

II. There are other barriers, which can create problems in the sexual relationship.

A. Lack of understanding that your thought-life is the *primary source* of your sexuality

1. Not cultivating and nurturing sexual desire for your spouse
2. Not focusing on the things you appreciate or enjoy about your spouse, such as certain physical traits, acts of service, accomplishments, personality and character traits
3. Focusing on the negative physical and character traits of your spouse
4. Focusing on the negative physical aspects of your own body
5. Not taking time to mentally prepare for your sexual encounters by praying, renewing your mind and utilizing God's resources

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B. Unrealistic expectations

1. You may believe that each sexual encounter should be an ecstatic one. This assumption is often based on
 - a. society's influences:
 - 1) sexual ecstasy depicted in movies, writings or songs.
 - 2) information from peers who brag about their conquests.
 - b. memories of sinful sexual encounters with other partners before or during the present marriage.
2. You may place emphasis on performance, resulting in the
 - a. belief that you and your spouse should reach a climax during every sexual encounter.
 - b. belief that you or your spouse is a failure if the sex act does not meet your own or your spouse's expectations.
 - c. demand that your spouse exists to make sexual experiences ecstatic.

C. Use of lustful sex to mask marriage problems

1. A couple who has an unloving way of relating may engage in lust-driven sex, which can be the means of covering over problems and/or escaping them.
2. The husband and wife may use this means to convince themselves that life together is good when it really isn't. Thus, sinful ways of relating continue unresolved.

D. Lack of a time or an energy commitment for the sexual relationship

1. Allowing family and/or job demands to crowd out time for the sexual relationship
2. Becoming so involved with other people, activities and pursuits that one or both partners are frequently too tired for sex
3. Allowing "entertainment," such as too much time spent watching TV or involvement in other pursuits, to crowd out time that should be spent in verbal and sexual communication
4. Unwilling to set aside time or to plan for the sexual relationship

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5. Developing an apathy toward the sexual relationship
 6. Not viewing your spouse as your Number One human priority, which includes an investment in time, energy and planning to fulfill God's commands in relation to your mate emotionally, spiritually and sexually
- E. Lack of communication about the sexual relationship
1. Partners may feel the lack of freedom and/or fear to openly communicate about the positive and negative aspects of their relationship.
 2. Partners may feel isolated from each other, lacking meaningful communication in their daily life, which negatively impacts their ability to discuss their sex life.
- F. Lust, sexual or romantic fantasy, pornography (1 John 2:16) See sections on these topics in *Sexual Sin*.
1. If you are controlled by these indulgences, you may believe the lie that sex is a "need" rather than a desire.
 - a. You may be demanding, overbearing and unloving, which often results in excusing or denying how your own sin is negatively impacting your spouse.
 - b. You may try to force your spouse to fulfill your sinful fantasies.
 - c. You may have insatiable demands.
 2. If you are in bondage to these sins, you may regularly deny your spouse, withdrawing physically, sexually, spiritually and/or emotionally.
- G. Lack of creativity
1. The sexual relationship is boring or "Ho-hum" because of lack of planning and thinking about how to create a more exciting, stimulating or interesting relationship, both romantically and sexually.
 2. The couple does not discuss ways that they can create different atmospheres, try new ways to express their love, try new positions, new techniques and new environments to enhance their lovemaking.
 3. You are unwilling to take the risk involved to try new things when your spouse ignores your attempts to communicate about creativity in your relationship..

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

Ps. 51:10

DISCERNMENT CONCERNING SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”
1 Cor. 10:31

The goal of every Christian couple should be to glorify God through their sexuality. This goal is reached through an intimate communion and expression of love, which creates a mutual delight. (Prov. 5:18,19) Couples who establish ungodly goals usually divorce their sexual relationship from agape and phileo love. Instead, they strive for the goals of excitement, stimulation and climax.

From ungodly goals, flow ungodly assumptions. One such assumption is that “anything goes” in the marriage bed as long as there is mutual agreement. This false belief will impact the marriage and influence the sexual relationship to be motivated by lust rather than by love. Believers cannot use a sinful means to achieve *any* goal.

- I. The commandments of God are always the standard for sexual expression in marriage.
 - A. You must bring your sexuality under the control of the Holy Spirit and scriptural principles.
 - B. You must remember that biblical love is always the standard to which sexual attitudes and practices are to be submitted. Develop discernment by answering these questions. Does the attitude or practice
 1. violate, exploit, defraud or take advantage of your spouse? (1 Thess. 4:6)
 2. demand its own way or seek for self? (1 Cor. 13:5)
 3. *protect* the spouse? (1 Cor. 13:7a)
 4. rejoice in God’s truth rather than rejoicing in evil? (1 Cor. 13:6)
 5. submit to God’s truths? (1 John 3:18)
 6. exhibit patience, humility, kindness, gentleness and forgiveness? (Col. 3:12-14)
 7. edify or build up the faith of your mate? (1 Cor. 8:1b; 1 Thess. 5:11)
 8. seek the good of your spouse? (Gal. 6:10)
- “...always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.”***
1 Thess. 5:15b NASB
9. promote oneness of mind, spirit and purpose? (Phil. 2:1,2)

DISCERNMENT CONCERNING SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

*“If I fear to hold another to the highest goal
because it is much easier to avoid doing so,
then I know nothing of Calvary love.”*

If
Amy Carmichael

***“...so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ,
to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”***

1 Pet. 4:11b NASB

II. Sinful sexual practices must be forsaken.

The Bible is clear in defining sin, either through direct commands or through scriptural principles. In the marriage relationship, there may be areas of sexual practice that are sinful. Building on the foundation of biblical love, the following scriptural principles will help clarify what is glorifying to God in the sexual relationship. (1 Thess. 5:21,22)

“...let the marriage bed be undefiled.”

Heb. 13:4b NASB

- A. The activity *is* sinful if it violates the commands or principles of Scripture
 - 1. even if both parties willingly participate.
 - 2. even if one or both are sexually aroused by the practice.
 - 3. even if it is the *only* means by which you or your partner reaches a climax.
- B. The following are some examples of sinful behaviors that people may try to justify because the goal is sexual stimulation rather than glorifying God in the bedroom.
 - 1. Using vulgar, profane language; coarse language and joking (Col. 3:8, Eph. 4:29; 5:4)
 - 2. Taking the Lord’s name in vain (Ex. 20:7)
 - 3. Using sexually explicit material, even if it supposed to be “educational.” (Ps. 101:3,4; 1 Cor. 13:6)
 - 4. Masturbating because of not achieving the desired stimulation from your spouse or for any other reason (Rom. 13:14)
 - 5. Escaping into fantasy; acting out fantasies and role-playing (John 17:17; Eph. 4:25; 3 John 4; Phil. 4:8; 1 Cor. 13:6b)

DISCERNMENT CONCERNING SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

3 John 4

“...each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him.

The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.”

1 Thess. 4:4-6

- C. The activity *is* sinful if it violates or defrauds your spouse by *demanding* an act
1. that is humiliating or demeaning.
 2. that does not demonstrate honor and respect for your spouse.
 3. that your spouse finds uncomfortable or distasteful.
 4. that purposely inflicts pain.
 5. that is motivated by lust. (1 John 2:16)

*“Love is kind...it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self seeking,
...it does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.*

It always protects...”

1 Cor. 13:4-7a

- D. Conflicts over sinful sexual practices
1. When both marriage partners desire to have a God-glorifying relationship:
 - a. The spouse who is convicted that a certain practice is sinful should lovingly request that the sinful activity be removed from the relationship.
 - b. Each should commit to keeping the lines of communication open, speaking freely and listening carefully. Remain approachable and teachable.
 - c. Both should pray together
 - 1) for guidance and wisdom from the Word and the Spirit. (Jas. 1:5)
 - 2) for grace and strength to renounce the sinful activity and to accept God’s standards because they are good, pure and holy. (Phil. 4:13)
 - d. Both should submit their decisions to God’s commands and principles if there is disagreement.

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- e. Both must eliminate sinful practices.
2. When a Christian husband has an unbelieving or uncooperative wife:
 - a. The husband must forgive his wife before speaking lovingly to her about his convictions and perhaps showing her scripturally why he views an activity as sinful. (Eph. 4:15)
 - b. He must explain his conclusions without self-righteousness.
 - c. The husband should cease from the sinful activity even if his wife continues to sin.
3. When a Christian wife has an unbelieving or uncooperative husband:
 - a. She must forgive him before approaching him to speak the truth in love.
 - b. She must explain her conclusions without self-righteousness.
 - c. She must refuse to participate in sinful practices.
 - 1) She is called to obey God and not her husband when he commands her to do something that violates Scripture. (Acts 5:29; Gal. 1:10)
 - 2) She must realize that her husband may continue *alone* in his sinful activities, over which she has no control. For example, he may continue to view pornography, use vulgar language, participate in fantasy role-plays, or masturbate without her involvement.
 - d. She should not submit if the act violates the law by inflicting bodily pain or is abusive. (Rom. 13:1-5; 1 Pet. 1:13-15)
 - 1) She should determine if the abuse violates the law by seeking legal advice through the police department, women's shelters, domestic violence centers or lawyers.
 - 2) She should be involved with her discipler and a pastor/elder to receive counsel, encouragement and accountability.
 - 3) She should warn her husband that the abuse must stop and report him to the legal authorities if it continues.

DISCERNMENT CONCERNING SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

III. Areas of liberty are permissible and may or may not be desirable.

Areas of liberty concern activities, which are not prohibited by command or principle of Scripture. Participation in and desire for such practices may vary from person to person. Experimenting with new approaches often creates mutual delight and discovery and keeps sexual activity from becoming routine and repetitious.

- A. When there is disagreement in an area of liberty, the following concepts should be considered:
1. The more restrained spouse should seek to give of himself/herself more freely.
 2. The more adventuresome spouse should focus on loving and not violating or offending his loved one.
 3. An area of liberty should promote spiritual, emotional and sexual oneness instead of division. (Phil. 2:1,2)
 4. An act may be in an area of liberty, but it is sin on the part of the spouse who *insists* upon participation against the wishes of his/her partner. (1 Thess. 4:6; Phil. 2:3)
- B. When there is disagreement, and both spouses are seeking to glorify God:
1. Feel free to approach your spouse with desires and wishes.
 2. Speak lovingly and listen carefully while evaluating the activity in light of the concepts just mentioned.
 3. Pray together for direction.
 4. Realize that perceived rights may need to be relinquished.
- C. When a Christian husband has an uncooperative wife:
1. He is to speak lovingly to his wife.
 2. He may choose to exercise his God-given role as leader, saying, “No” to the activity, which is distasteful or uncomfortable to him.
 3. He may choose to give up his preference to please his wife.
- D. When a Christian wife has an uncooperative husband:
1. She may appeal to her husband to cease from the activity that she finds distasteful or uncomfortable. See *Admonishing, CTO* for guidance in preparation.

DISCERNMENT CONCERNING SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

2. She is called to submit to him if he declines her appeal; forgiving, praying, thanking God for the difficulties, entrusting herself to Him. (1 Pet. 2:18-3:6; Phil. 4:6,7)

IV. The following questions will help evaluate sexual practices in the light of God's Word:

- A. Does God define the thoughts or activities as sin, either by biblical command or by principle? (Ps. 119:11)
- B. Do attitudes or behaviors being considered bring glory to God? (1 Cor. 10:31)
- C. Are the thoughts and practices in accordance with God's laws of love?

“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ...”

Phil. 1:9-10

“The wise in heart are called discerning...”

Prov. 16:21a