

SEX IN MARRIAGE

“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)