

PREMARITAL COUNSELLING
SESSION FOUR
SEXUAL FULFILMENT IN MARRIAGE

I. The Purpose of our Sexual Relationships

God created us to have sexual pleasure. Procreation is not the only reason for this relationship. It is also for pleasure. It is a means of relating to each.

"For married people, frequent sexual intercourse, like the caresses and endearments of which it should be the climax, is healthful and right and promotes happiness and morality."

John R. Rice

II. The Problems of our Sexual Relationships

There should be frequent showing of affection without the expectation or thought of sexual intercourse. There are several problems which must be identified **before** marriage.

1. Don't expect too much from sexual relationships - especially the first few times (once married).
2. Don't (especially a woman) expect to reach an orgasm each time you have sexual intercourse.
3. Don't consider sexual intercourse only for procreation.
4. Don't use "sex" as your only method of displaying affection.
5. Don't use "sex" as a weapon to get what you want.
6. Don't see sexual fulfilment as something wrong or dirty in the bond of marriage.
7. Don't use the bond of marriage as a license for perversion of sex (anything goes attitude).
8. Don't enter marriage without first discussing parenthood and birth control.
9. Don't overlook the need for physical cleanliness (our nose is sensitive to undesired odours).
10. Don't overlook the need to be sensitive to each other's needs as well as to the correct timing.
11. Don't overlook the fact that you'll still have to battle sexual temptation (impure thoughts, enticement, etc.)
12. Don't be overly concerned with premature ejaculation. It can be solved with proper counsel.
13. Don't be overly concerned with being a pre-orgasmic wife.
The P.C. muscles can be exercised and strengthened.
14. Don't forsake the Lord's Word concerning sexuality **before** your marriage or you'll set a poor pattern for your marriage.

III. Ten Objective Questions to Ask

1. Are you in love with the body or the person you are to marry?
2. Do you have, along with the feeling of pleasure, a feeling of reverence for your partner?
3. Do you care more about the other person than you do about yourself.
4. Are you willing to take the responsibility and accept it joyfully?
5. Do you enjoy being with each other so much that it hurts to be separated a long time?
6. Do you enjoy each other without the constant need for physical expression?
7. Do you have a protective attitude toward your partner?
8. Do you feel that you belong to each other?
9. Do you understand each other?
10. Is your love maturing?

Dr. Howard G. Hendricks

IV. The Secret of Staying in Love (by Dr. Ed Wheat)

The secret of staying in love is found in one very powerful word: **INTIMACY**. Intimacy (derived from a Latin word "*intimus*", meaning "*inmost*") refers to the state of being most private or most personal in a relationship. It depicts a special quality of emotional closeness between two people in which both are constantly alert and responsive to fluctuations of feeling and to well-being of each other. It will demand time and a conscious effort by both partners.

Dr. Helen Kaplin said, "*A high degree of intimacy between two lovers or spouses contributes to the happiness and emotional stability of both.*" She warns that "*without intimate relationships, we tend to get lonely and become depressed.*" This can begin to happen according to Dr. William Appleton, in the first year of marriage.

Here are some of the strands that make up the bond of intimacy between a husband and wife:

- physical touching of affectionate, non-sexual nature
- shared feelings
- open communication and honesty
- intellectual agreement on major issues
- spiritual harmony
- similar values held
- imparted secrets
- genuine understanding
- mutual confidence
- signs of love freely given and received
- mutual responsibility and caring
- abiding trust

These strands can be pieced together with time, your will, knowledge and patience. God chose one year (Deuteronomy 24:5) of concentrated togetherness for newlyweds in order to establish the patterns of intimacy that would last a lifetime.

V. Prescription for a Superb Marriage

If you want the best marriage, you must give your partner the best you have:

Blessing
Edifying
Sharing
Touching

A. Blessing - The Bible commands us to practise blessing each other. It comes from the Greek word "*eulogia*". It is derived from two words "*eu*" meaning "*well*" and "*logos*" meaning "*word*." We must learn to speak well even if our fiancée's speech at the present time is harsh, critical or insulting (I Peter 3:10). You can bless in three ways:

1. Simply by doing things.
2. Showing thankfulness and appreciation.
3. Requesting God's favour through prayer.

B. Edifying - This word means to build someone up. It can be done by cheering one another up and by increasing each other's self-worth.

"Make thy love larger than my worth"

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The word "*edifying*" is derived from the Latin word "*aedes*" which means "*a hearth or fireplace*." A fireplace has an emotional association. It is a place of cosy warmth with loving relationship. The Bible encourages us to edify one another (Romans 14:19; 15:2; I Thessalonians 5:11).

A husband edifies by praising his wife. A wife edifies through her loving response. The Greek word for "*edify*" is "*oikodomeo*". It is derived from two words "*oikos*" which means "*family home or house*" and "*demo*" which means "*build*".

C. Sharing - This could touch all areas of your life -- your time, activities, interests, concerns, ideas, innermost thoughts, spiritual walk, family objectives and goals. Sharing will demand that you give of yourself and listen to your partner.

V. Prescription for a Superb Marriage (Contd.)

D. Touching - God made us with hundreds of thousands of microscopic nerve endings in our skin to sense and benefit from a loving touch. It can calm our fears, soothe pain, bring us comfort, or give us the blessed satisfaction of emotional security.

The reason we don't touch each other more is because of our western society. It frowns on or ignores touching apart from sex. Touching can be done simply by snuggling, cuddling, sleeping close together (once married) and sharing through a simple touch.

VI. Pre-marital Intercourse

Our society has been very open to this type of relationship. We call it "common-law marriages". The Bible has two names to describe this act:

A. Fornication - The Greek word "*porneia*" is basically harlotry, including adultery and incest. It is an unlawful lust (I Corinthians 6:13,18,19).

B. Adultery - The Greek word "*moichos*" is one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another (I Corinthians 6:9; Hebrews 13:4).

It is a serious offence against God's law to continue to have sexual relationships outside of the bond of marriage. It will keep a person from entering heaven (I Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-7).

VII. Birth Control

Children are both a heritage from the Lord and a reward (Psalm 127:3-5). It is estimated that 15% of marriages in the USA are childless because of infertility. Another 10% have fewer children than they want. Family planning is private matter which you must discuss with each other. During a year of unprotected intercourse, 80% of couples of childbearing age will conceive. The following factors should be considered.

1. Is it desirable for a newly married couple to have some time of adjustment before beginning a family?
2. The health of the wife is most important issue.
3. Parents need to be able to provide adequately for each child.
4. The fear of pregnancy often inhibits the enjoyment of a sexual relationship.

VII. Birth Control (Contd.)

If you decide to postpone pregnancy there are several contraceptive methods available. You need to consider:

- 1. Safety**
- 2. Effectiveness**
- 3. Motivation**
- 4. Personal taste**

There are several artificial methods available (The following information is from Scott Jackson M. D.).

1. Oral Contraceptives (the pill)

Ovulation is directed by hormones, mainly estrogen and progesterone. Oral contraceptives consist of man-made versions of these hormones. They work to prevent the ovaries from producing eggs. Also, they help prevent the sperm from reaching the egg. Several types of oral contraceptives exist with different levels of hormones. They are also available in 21-day or 28-day packs. Oral contraceptives are the most effective birth control method. There are certain side effects which include headaches, weight gain, breast tenderness, and mid-cycle bleeding. There is also a higher risk of blood clots or vascular disease, especially if one smokes while on the pill. The use of oral contraceptives must be monitored by a physician and must include yearly pap tests.

2. The Diaphragm

The diaphragm is a soft rubber or latex cup that is inserted into the vagina to cover the cervix. It works as a barrier to sperm and is used with spermicidal jelly or cream which kills sperm before they enter the uterus and fertilize the eggs. The diaphragm will need to be fitted by your physician. You will be instructed on how to insert it and how to properly apply the spermicide. The diaphragm is highly effective if properly used. It must be inserted prior to intercourse each time. Afterwards, it can be cleaned with soap and water. The diaphragm should be replaced every two years.

3. Spermicides

Spermicides kill sperm so that none can enter the uterus and fertilize an egg. They consist of jelly, cream, foam, or suppositories. When used with a diaphragm, they can be highly effective. Some use foam or suppositories without a diaphragm. They can be obtained without a prescription and are rather inexpensive. However, their effectiveness in birth control is not as high as the two previous methods mentioned.

VII. Birth Control (Contd.)

4. Cervical Cap

The cervical cap is a smaller version of the diaphragm. It consists of a slightly thicker rubber and is filled with spermicidal jelly or cream. It should be fitted by your physician and must be rechecked yearly. The cervical cap is applied at the time of each intercourse.

5. Condoms

The condom is a thin shield of latex that fits over the man's penis. It traps expelled semen during intercourse, preventing sperm from fertilizing an egg. The condom should be applied to the erect penis before intercourse. Afterward, he should withdraw immediately to prevent leakage. Condoms should be used in combination with spermicidal suppositories, jelly, cream, or foam as a backup form of birth control in case of leakage or breakage. Condoms, in general, are not as effective in birth control as the pill or diaphragm.

6. Contraceptive Sponges

The contraceptive sponge is a small, disposable, round, spermicide-containing sponge, which can be purchased over-the-counter. Use of the sponge can be fairly expensive because a new sponge must be used each time a couple has intercourse. Water is applied to the sponge, and it inserted over the cervix. It does provide 24 hour protection and is about as effective as the diaphragm, except in women who have already had children.

7. The Intrauterine Device (IUD - early abortion!!!)

The IUD is a small plastic or metal device that is placed by a physician inside the uterus through the opening in the cervix. The IUD is highly effective in birth control. It is thought to work by preventing the fertilized egg from implanting on the uterine wall or blocking the sperm from reaching the egg. Some have felt that the IUD contradicts Christian values by possibly causing a type of abortion since the egg may already be fertilized at the time it is prevented from implanting on the uterine wall. The IUD must be checked at least annually and changed regularly.

VII. Birth Control (Contd.)

8. Natural Family Planning

Natural family planning or the “*rhythm method*” utilizes the fact that fertilization is most likely to occur just before, during, or after ovulation. It is the least effective birth control method since even the most regular cycles can vary from month to month. The woman can monitor her ovulation schedule by checking her body temperature every morning and plotting it on a calendar for several months. She usually sees a slight rise in temperature during ovulation. Usually a pattern occurs, alerting the couple to avoid intercourse during the most fertile days. Most find that ovulation occurs 14 days before the start of the next menstrual period. Another way of determining ovulation is cervical mucus charting which involves observing a sample of mucus from the vagina daily. The mucus becomes clear, elastic and slippery during ovulation.

There are several surgical methods that some choose:

1. The vasectomy

2. Tubal ligation

There is also:

1. Withdrawal method (Coitus Interupus) Genesis 38:8-10

2. Abstinence (I Corinthians 7:3-5)

The sexual part of any marriage is one of the 5 main areas that need to be strong in a marriage. Couples who are having marital difficulties often (80%) admit there are not feeling fulfilled in their sexual relationship. It is very important to be sensitive in this area. Couples who do not see the seriousness of having a vital sexual relationship seem to pay the price very quickly.

Several books that cover the topic of the sexual relation within marriage that are recommended reading are:

“*The Act of Marriage*” - by Tim and Beverley LaHaye

“*Intended for Pleasure*” - by Dr. Ed Wheat