

The Sexual Relationship in Marriage

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Text:

Introduction:

- I. Key points:
 - A. Sex was created by God to be enjoyed regularly by husband and wife.
 - B. There are critical differences in husband and wife; the understanding of which builds a more fulfilling sexual relationship.
 - C. There are some common problems that prevent sexual fulfillment.
- II. My goal in this forum
 - A. To talk in candid and practical terms about the sexual relationship in marriage.
 - B. To provide information that will help not only in our own relationships with our wives but also to help teach others to improve their relationships.
 1. We need to be prepared to help people prepare for the marriage not just a wedding!

Body:

- I. **SEX WAS DESIGNED BY GOD AND INTENDED FOR THE REGULAR PLEASURE OF BOTH THE MAN AND THE WOMAN**
 - A. This pleasurable intent is properly and fully carried out only in the bonds of marriage
 1. To more fully understand the sexual aspect of the marriage relationship, it is imperative that we begin with a clear understanding of the general functions of marriage.
 - a. **Procreation** (Gen. 3:16)
 - b. **Companionship** (Gen. 2:18)
 - 1) Companionship goes well beyond friendship or acquaintance.
 - a) After creating a helper comparable to the first man, Adam declared: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Gen. 2:23)
 - 2) Within the context of the creation of a “comparable” mate, a companion, God then adds: “Therefore (He’s making a conclusion about companionship) a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (Gen. 2:24)
 - 3) It seems that companionship includes the sexual relationship but is not limited to it.
 - a) Certainly, this helper, companion, help-meet, is more than your average friend, this text equates this level of companionship to only our spouses.
 - 4) Notice Malachi 2:14: “Yet you say, ‘For what reason? Because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you

have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.”

- a) “Companion” (OT:2278) *chabereth* (khab-eh'-reth); feminine of OT:2270; *chaber* (khaw-bare'); KJV - companion, fellow, knit together.

c. **Prevention of sexual immorality** (1 Cor. 7:1-9)

- 1) “Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.” (1 Cor. 7:2)
 - a) One of the reasons for marriage is to create a relationship where sexual fulfillment can be found.
- 2) The sexual relationship within marriage is a selfless relationship which places focus and emphasis on the sexual needs of the spouse.
 - a) “Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.” (1 Cor. 7:3)
 - b) “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.” (1 Cor. 7:4)
 - c) This selfless focus in the bedroom is an extension of the love [*agape*] that husbands and wives are to have for one another.
- 3) This text also demonstrates the necessity of both parties having a selfless emphasis on their spouse if the marriage is to flourish.
 - a) One party can hold a marriage together, but it requires the full effort of both for that marriage to flourish and be what God wants it to be.

d. **Pleasure** (Prov. 5:15-20; Song of Solomon)

- 1) God created sex in marriage to be a pleasure.
 - 2) This is the one relationship that God provided for man and wife to be completely free to fulfill their sexual desires.
2. Throughout the Bible God used the intimacy of the marriage relationship as an analogy to the depth and significance of the spiritual relationship between Him and His people.
- a. Old Testament
 - 1) Husband – wife analogy (Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 3:14; 7:9; 16:21; 23:10; 31:32; Ezek. 16; Hosea 2:19-20)
 - 2) The prophet Hosea
 - 3) Song of Solomon
 - a) Even if the Song is an allegory it continues to demonstrate the level of intimacy that exists between husband and wife, and that intimacy is not manifested any greater than in the sexual relationship between two people who deeply love one another.
 - b. New Testament
 - 1) Relationship of Christ to the church (Eph. 5:22-33)

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- 2) Harlot and the Bride (Rev. 17-18; 21:2, 9-10)
 - 3) Jesus twice uses the marriage analogy in His parables to describe some aspect of His relationship to disciples
 - a) The Parable of the Wedding Feast (Mt. 22:2-14)
 - b) The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13)
 - c) Additionally, He may be alluding to the Hebrew wedding tradition when He stated, "I go to prepare a place for you..." (Jn. 14:1-3)
3. Biblical language and command also demonstrate the level of intimacy of the marriage relationship
- a. The same word ["know" / "knew"] that is used to describe the relationship of God to His people is used to describe the sexual relationship of husband and wife (Gen. 4:1; Lk. 1:34; Mt. 1:25)
 - 1) "Scripture suggest that just as we can know God, so we can know our husband or wife in a deeper, higher, more intimate way through the physical act of marriage." (Wheat, 19)
 - b. The Law of Moses commands that a man is not to engage in many activities the first year of his marriage in order to "cheer up his wife." (Deut. 24:5)
 - 1) "To "cheer up" the wife means literally in Hebrew "to know sexually and understand what is exquisitely pleasing to her." (Wheat, 23)
- B. Compatible mates
1. Male and female in marriage are the only compatible mates to make the other "whole" in accordance with God's plan
 - a. Leave and cleave (Gen. 2:24)
 - b. Creation was good, man alone was not (Gen. 2:18)
 2. Male and female are the only ones in creation created in the image of their Creator. We may share some characteristics with the animal kingdom but we are the only creatures created in His image; suggesting relationship.
 - a. Additionally we are the only creatures in creation that use the endowment of cognitive choice in selection of our mates and in choosing to engage in a sexual relationship.
 - 1) It is also interesting to note that we are the only creatures in creation that sexually relate to one another face-to-face.
- C. "The two shall become one flesh"
1. This phrase is used in a broad context of the bringing together of two separate lives and developing one entity of those two. (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5-6; Mk. 10:8; Eph. 5:31)
 2. The same phrase is also used in the very specific context of the sexual union (1 Cor. 6:16)
 3. The imagery of this phrase clearly demonstrates the total melting together of these two individuals' lives and that combination is no better or more deeply manifested than in the sexual union.
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4. It would also seem that it demonstrates the intent of God that we come together and are “one flesh” in so many different ways, *i.e.*, physically, emotionally, spiritually; which would also seem to suggest that they are intended to be inter-related and the greatest fulfillment comes when they are inter-related.
- D. The ideal situation of the creation suggests how comfortable the first couple was with sexuality and their sexual relationship.
 1. It is interesting to note that their sexual comfort with one another was prior to the command to procreate.
 - a. This order would seem to suggest that the sexual relationship was, by design, intended for pleasure first.
 2. Sex in the marriage union was intended to be enjoyed regularly and to its fullest extent.
 - a. “There are no restrictions, sexually within marriage provided it is loving.” (Penner, 127)

II. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE:

- A. I believe that the most significant challenge to sexual fulfillment of both spouses is a deep understanding of the differences in the man and woman
 1. I don’t think that this can be understated. When a young man and a young woman arrive at the marriage bed if they both do what comes to them naturally (physically, emotionally, etc.) it is a disaster.
 2. Probably the most important reason that we understand this, in particular that the men understand this, is because EVERYTHING that happens in marriage effects the sexual fulfillment of both spouses.
 3. God expects our marriages not just to survive but to thrive and that cannot happen if both spouses do not have a clear understanding of the other.
- B. “Dwell with understanding?”
 1. “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Pet. 3:7)
 2. In my youth I foolishly tried to convince myself that it was impossible to “understand women” and therefore this text had to mean something else! I was terribly wrong; this passage means exactly what it says.
 3. Notice another key point of this passage:
 - a. Husband and wife are equal spiritual heirs and the spiritual life, growth and development of each spouse is predicated on the success of the marital relationship.
 4. Conclusion:
 - a. Husband and wife need to understand what is going on behind the eyes of their spouse.
- C. I want to consider the basic differences in a few key categories: general gender differences, specific gender differences in each individual marriage and specific personality differences in each individual marriage

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1. General gender differences
 - a. A husband cannot understand his wife until he understands the fundamental differences between male and female and vice versa.
 - 1) We live in a culture that is trying desperately to convince itself that gender is driven by environment rather than biology; nothing could be further from the truth
 - a) “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’”(Mt 19:4)
 - 2) God created male and female differently (physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, sexually, etc.)
 - a) By design, nearly every aspect of human characteristic is different in men and women.
 - b. Probably the greatest difference in man and woman that effects sexual fulfillment is our emotional difference.
 - 1) Men do not seem to be sexually effected by emotional events, at least to the level that a woman is; sex is an emotional event for a woman.
 - a) “Sex for sex’s sake is not very appealing to a woman. But sex as the natural outcome of relational intimacy is very appealing. The way to approach sex with a woman is through relationship.” (McBurney, 106)
 - 2) Wives who find themselves in a marriage that is emotionally distant feel cheapened by sex with their husbands; even when the husband perceives a loving experience.
 - a) Husbands seem to possess the capacity to “compartmentalize” emotions; wives do not.
 - c. The need for sexual fulfillment has a different priority for husbands than wives and it is manifested in different ways.
 - 1) Men usually have stronger sexual needs and women have stronger emotional needs.
 - 2) “What’s the #1 need for a man in a marriage? Affirmation? It’s important, but not the top need. Communication? Get real! Sex? Now you’re talking...but this isn’t exactly right either. Most women think men are ‘after only one thing,’ but that’s far too simplistic. The #1 need is not sex, but sexual fulfillment. There’s a...difference.” (Leman, 149)
 - 3) Conversely, “more than anything, women need affection. Hugs, kisses, handholding, backrubs. But not sex. They need affection as affection, not just foreplay... Women need to be petted, caressed, embraced.” (Leman, 151)
 - 4) It is not that wives don’t need or desire sexual fulfillment; it just carries a different weight for a wife than her husband and it is much more deeply connected to relational affirmation and emotional stability and security.
 - a) “His emotional openness allows her to become more sexually vulnerable.” (McBurney, 113)
 - 5) Sexual rejection to a man is devastating to his ego (masculinity); conversely emotional rejection to a woman is equally devastating.

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- a) If a man seeks to avoid sexual frustration he must be in the continual pursuit of his wife's love and emotional and relational fulfillment.
 - 1] "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her," (Eph 5:25)
 - 2] "Husbands must be 100 percent committed to loving his wife." (Wheat, 27)
 - d. Beyond the difference in needs is also the significant difference in both the catalyst and the timing of sexual arousal.
 - 1) Generally men are aroused by sight, sound, smell, *etc.* Lingerie is not for women it's for men! Additionally they can become aroused immediately.
 - 2) Conversely, women are generally aroused by emotion and take considerably longer to reach arousal.
 - 3) Gary Chapman probably says it best, "Men are microwaves and women are crockpots." (Leman, 151)
 - a) He goes on to make an even more important point, "The crockpots get colder and colder if men do not practice courtesy and hygiene, and if they engage in verbal abuse, condescending attitudes, and angry outbursts." (Leman, 151)
2. Specific gender differences in each individual marriage
- a. In 1 Peter 3:7 husbands are charged with the responsibility of dwelling with understanding.
 - 1) This is not a command to figure out the great mysteries of all womankind; it is an instruction to me as a husband to understand MY wife, not all wives.
 - 2) Although this command is given specifically to the husbands, possibly because we need to be reminded more, it is also paramount that a wife understands what makes her husband tick.
 - 3) This level of understanding requires time, experience, intimacy, and effective communication.
 - a) Couples have to make a conscious and concerted effort to develop this level of understanding.
 - b) Additionally, both husband and wife are continually changing and growing (hopefully) therefore this is a life long process.
 - b. Significant events in the life of each spouse have great impact on their sexual relationship. What God "coded" into each male and female is affected by environment.
 - c. Death, sickness, abuse, family circumstances, tragedy, accidents, *etc.* can change some of the general characteristics in male and female in regard to sexual fulfillment.
 - d. Another key element to an individual's outlook on sexual fulfillment is the message sent by influences in each individual life.¹
 - 1) **Parents**
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- a) Parents send messages, both spoken and unspoken, regarding their attitudes toward sexual fulfillment in marriage.
- b) Many parents have deep passion for one another yet rarely show any affection in the presence of their children; the message that is conveyed is that mom and dad could take it or leave it.
- c) Conversely, particularly in our current culture, sexual partners of parents may come and go so often that children get the message that promiscuity is the key to sexual fulfillment.
- d) The relationship of parents can have a deep effect on the marital relationship of their offspring.
 - 1] Mom's who feel no love and receive no affection from their husbands may convey to their daughters that sex is a weapon to be used to achieve a goal; in that same relationship the father may convey to the son not to expect much from the sexual relationship with his wife and then it's going to cost him.
 - 2] Obviously if adultery is committed the message is deafening!

2) Social input

- a) We'll discuss this again later in the lecture but it is obvious that culture does have an effect on sexual attitudes.

3) Religious input

- a) This is a critical element for us to consider. There are times when preachers, elders, teachers and parents have a tendency to lose balance in biblical teaching. When I was young the only message from preachers and teachers about sex was: DON'T! They didn't seem to balance that teaching with the beauty of sexual pleasure between husband and wife.
- b) Many generations went by when sex was viewed as either an unsavory, unsatisfying and unfulfilling duty to be endured or for the sole purpose of procreation.

4) Early sexual experiences

- a) Early sexual experience deeply influences who we become.
- b) These experiences can create either feelings of guilt, anxiety or even fear associated with sexual activity.

5) Early marital experiences

- a) Disappointment, unfulfilled expectations and frustration in early marriage form habits that may last for many years.

6) Effect of children

- a) This has an obvious effect on the sexual fulfillment of a couple, particularly when a couple has children soon after marriage, before they have grown to understand one another. Additionally, children change the dynamic of time, attention and even finances.

3. Specific personality differences in each individual marriage

- a. Each individual has a unique personality, beyond the general gender characteristics we each possess. This third point deals with what happens when you bring two specific people together as “one flesh.”
- b. Some people are aggressive, others passive, some are extroverts, some introverts, *etc.*
- c. Our personalities are God-given, although affected by environment. Certainly our divinely endowed personalities should not be used as an excuse to sin. God expects each one to exert control over body and spirit (1 Cor. 9:27)
- d. Individual personalities are as affected by experience and environment as are gender differences.
 - 1) Example: An aggressive young man usually tempers his aggression when he realizes the problems that result from unchecked aggression.
- e. Personality is also affected by birth order.²
 - 1) Whom did you marry?
 - a) What specific personality traits does your spouse possess and how were those traits nurtured in their childhood.

III. OTHER CHALLENGES:

- A. A failure to understand how the other party operates, physiologically³
 1. Many young couples do not understand the sexual terrain of their own bodies let alone that of their mates.
 2. Just like it takes time and experience to understand the significant emotional differences of male and female it takes time and experience to understand the physiological differences as well.
 3. Couples need to communicate what they find pleasurable and fulfilling to one another.
 - a. A married couple needs to possess the capacity to talk candidly about their sexual relationship
 - 1) Focus should be placed on love and care for the fulfillment of the other.
 - 2) Accusations or selfish motivations only serve to exacerbate the problem.
 - b. Couples need to teach one another to make love.
 4. Probably the most significant physiological difference is the manner in which male and female become aroused.
 - a. Males are generally aroused visually while females are aroused emotionally.
 - b. If this basic fact is not understood great confusion and frustration exists in a couple’s sexual relationship.
 5. There are numerous sources that provide tasteful quality instructions in this area (see bibliography).
- B. Effective communication
 1. Love can be and should be conveyed verbally but verbiage is a moot effort if it is not accompanied by the correct actions.

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2. Gary Chapman has done tremendous research on the various ways that love is communicated between couples.
 - a. He has categorized the communication of love into five categories:
 - 1) **Acts of service**
 - 2) **Quality time**
 - 3) **Gifts**
 - 4) **Words of affirmation**
 - 5) **Physical touch**
 - b. The problem that affects so many couples is that they are both working so hard to convey their love for their spouse but they are communicating in a way that the spouse does not recognize the expression of love.
 - 1) Example: If a husband understands love when it is expressed physically but a wife understands love when it is expressed in acts of service; they are both trying to express love in the way that they understand love and neither is getting the message.
 - 2) Generally speaking, people express love in the manner that they understand love, *i.e.*, gift-givers give gifts.
 3. Learn to express love in the manner that your spouse understands.
- C. Unrealistic expectations
1. We live in a culture that is not conducive to nurturing a child's nature, particularly in regard to the sexual relationship in marriage
 - a. While sex is talked about more in our society than at any previous time in our history the message is still very often wrong!
 - 1) Many times the proper message is sent for the wrong reason, *i.e.*, the message of our culture is that sexual abstinence is the best prevention of sexually transmitted disease (STD). Certainly abstinence prevents STD's but that's not the most important point of sexual abstinence; children should be taught to abstain because that is God's plan.
 - b. The message in our culture is that most forms of sexuality are acceptable; unchecked, the message will be that any form of sexuality or sexual expression is acceptable.
 - c. Additionally, more and more homes are broken and more and more fathers are disengaging from both their wives and children resulting in young men who don't know how to be fathers and husbands and young girls who don't know what they should expect from a decent man.
 - d. Consider the confusion that exists in young couples, who have now grown up in a culture dominated by television, movies, the Internet, video games, *etc.*, when they get married and the complex reality of marriage clashes with the image each had of marriage.
 - e. Our culture is no longer suited to convey a healthy image of sexuality to young people.
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2. A young man who marries most likely has very unrealistic expectations of his young wives sexual nature
 - a. He is effected by the hyper-sexuality of Hollywood
 - b. He may have dabbled in pornography and his expectations are built upon that experience
 - c. In both cases when he realizes that his expectations are not realistic problems ensue.
3. Conversely, a young woman who marries is very likely to have her own set of unrealistic expectations
 - a. She has spent a life time watching romantic comedies or reading romance novels and is shocked when she finds out that her husband is romantically challenged compared to the leading men of Hollywood.
4. In both cases, the expectations of both young men and women are nothing more than very effective marketing; both appeal to sexual nature:
 - a. Men are visually stimulated and women are stimulated relationally.

D. Misguided priorities

1. Aside from one's relationship with God there is no more important relationship than the relationship of husband and wife.
2. Children
 - a. Home is the training ground for future husbands, wives and parents; everything the parents do is an example to their children, good and bad.
 - 1) A mother who stops everything, including her relationship with her husband, to serve her children teaches her daughter to do the same as a wife and teaches her son to expect to take a back seat to his children.
 - 2) The same principle is true for the father.
 - b. Children must be trained to:
 - 1) Wait
 - 2) That mom and dad need private time
 - 3) To respect a locked door
 - c. This training will follow them to their marriages where they can then effectively balance a love for their children and the greater priority of their marriage.
 - d. Children's activities can and have become second jobs for many parents; spending thousands of dollars and unlimited amounts of time in the pursuit of a sport or activity. If the children's activities have become a priority over the marriage they have to be reduced or stopped.
3. Other activities
 - a. Work
 - 1) God has given us instructions regarding work ethic and we each one need to follow those instructions; however our jobs cannot take priority over our marriages.

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- a) Duty cannot be ignored; there are times that in the most immediate context family must wait; but in the bigger picture our priority is our spouse.
 - 2) This principle also applies to preachers.
 - a) We cannot fool ourselves into thinking that because of the importance of our calling that this doesn't apply to us.
 - b) We still must put our wives before our job.
 - c) Too many preachers have sacrificed their marriages and their children on the altar of evangelism.
 - d) None of us have to preach to go to heaven.
 - b. Hobby, recreation
 - 1) A small amount of time apart from one's spouse is probably good; I want to emphasize a small amount.
 - a) A little absence does make the heart grow fonder.
 - 2) Hobby and recreation can be the forum for that small time.
 - a) It can serve to reduce stress, tension and as a training place for children.
 - b) It can also be fun to teach your spouse your hobby
 - 3) Unfortunately in our "super-size" over-the-top culture, hobbies and recreation often take on the function of a second job.
 - 4. Family and friends
 - a. Some couples have tremendous trouble developing their sexual relationship to its fullest and deepest intimacy because of the relationship with family and friends.
 - b. When a couple is married they are melting together two separate lives.
 - 1) One may be a very social person who enjoys the regular company of many friends while the other is a loner and doesn't need as much social contact.
 - 2) One partner may be very close and reliant on family (parents, siblings, *etc.*) while the other partner is not close to family.
 - 3) All of these points play a role in their marriage and therefore their sexual fulfillment, and while a challenge to work these points out, they are not insurmountable.
 - c. The most significant point to impress upon married couples is that their post-marriage priorities must change to comply with biblical principles, *i.e.*, "leave and cleave."
- E. What is love?
- 1. Words are vehicles upon which thoughts are conveyed (I don't know who gets credit for this proverb).
 - a. If so, the word love in English conveys something much different than that of the biblical instructions given to husbands in regard to their wives, even though they are translated to the English "love."
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- b. English “love” doesn’t do justice to the instructions of the apostle Paul to husbands in regard to their feelings for their wives (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:19).
- 1) Love is defined as:
 - a) A profoundly tender, passionate affection for another person, esp. when based on sexual attraction.
 - c. It is indeed true that a husband will obviously have this love for his wife, but this is not what Paul is talking about.
 - 1) Biblical love is defined as:
 - a) “*AGAPAO*...and the corresponding noun *agape*...present ‘the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT. Cp., however, Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5.
 “Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God’s love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9,10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Cf. Deut 7:7, 8.
 “Self will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love....
 “Christian love...is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered....’
 “In respect of *agapao* as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant ‘love’ and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential ‘love’ in them towards the Giver, and a practical ‘love’ towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver.”
 (*The Expanded Vine’s Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*, 692-693)
 - d. The disparity between these two concepts of love is at the heart of many a marital problem including sexual fulfillment.
 - 1) Our culture conveys love in a purely emotional sense, therefore when the emotion is gone the love goes with it.
 - 2) Paul is teaching a deeper, more significant love that will last.
2. The importance of this point is that too many enter into marriage not having a clear idea of what love is and therefore when love, at least what they defined as love, is gone the marriage dissolves.
- a. In regard to this discussion it is critical that we understand the depth of the love that God expects us to develop toward spouses because it is that depth of love that is needed to truly find fulfillment, intimacy and satisfaction between husband and wife.
 - b. Sexual fulfillment is a spiritual consideration.
3. What is commitment?
- a. Biblical love and commitment to the object of that love are inextricably linked.
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- b. Married couples must develop a commitment to their marriage, their covenant with one another and God, to see their relationship through to the end.
 - 1) This level of commitment is a primary factor in sexual fulfillment in both male and female.
 - 2) There is comfort for both parties in a deep level of commitment to one another.

Conclusion:

- I. What legacy will we pass to the next generation?
 - A. The Bible repeatedly warns of the dangers of one generation failing to teach the whole counsel of God to subsequent generations.
 1. God included commands to teach younger generations in the Law of Moses (Deut. 4:9)
 2. The failure to properly teach the young is clearly seen throughout Israel's history. (Judg. 2:10)
 3. New Testament instructions command fathers to teach their children (Eph. 6:4)
 - B. There are several aspects of this study for us to consider in teaching our children:
 1. In each of our individual homes what messages do mom and dad convey to the children, in regard to love, romance and sex?
 2. How can we help those that we teach the proper biblical attitudes regarding love, romance, marriage and sex?
- II. The sexual relationship between husband and wife was designed by God to be enjoyed regularly and to its fullest extent. It is in fact a gift from God. We must seek to understand His instructions in regard to this topic.

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¹ Penner suggests these six primary external influences on the development of individual sexual attitudes.

² I would strongly suggest Kevin Leman's *The Birth Order Book*, particularly as a study guide for perspective young couples.

³ The books by both Wheat and Penner mentioned in the bibliography would serve as extremely helpful resources for couples having difficulty with any physiological problems in the relationship. Both of these resources do a good job in a tasteful manner describing how human sexual physiology is designed.