

Undeified

Honoring God in the Bedroom

“Is this okay?” she asked. “What do you mean?” he replied. “Is it okay for us to do this...in God’s eyes, I mean? Do you think He would say that what we are doing right now is okay?” “I don’t see why not. We are two consenting adults *and* we are married.” Satisfied with his answer, she ignored her convictions and continued on.

Today’s sexually lax and permissive society has left many Christian husbands and wives questioning whether its sexual practices are permissible within their marriages. Many commonly asked questions, such as, “How far can we go and still receive God’s blessing?” and “What can we do without calling it sin?” have made it increasingly apparent that many couples are choosing to adopt the society’s practices without first considering the implications to their relationships. While many couples are seeking answers so that they may glorify God within the bounds of *their* marriage, others are asking questions to justify and sanctify their sexual lusts. Because the Word of God remains silent on many sexual practices, we must decide whether certain acts are prohibited or permissible within marriage based on *our* convictions in light of its principles.

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts” (Proverbs 21:2, NKJV).

Begin by composing a list of sexual activities you believe may be questionable in the bedroom. (You will refer back to these with each biblical principle that is introduced.) _____

In what ways have you looked to the culture to sanctify your sexual practices rather than to God’s Word? _____

Have you excused personal conviction based on the fact that other couples are participating in the same act? Why or why not? _____

Why might one activity be right for you and your spouse and wrong for another couple? _____

Flawless

In Lesson Ten, we discovered that Adam and his wife, Eve, were naked and unashamed (Genesis 2:25). Without fear and without inhibition, they were free to enjoy each other’s bodies as they pleased. Likewise, when transparency and trust exist in the sexual relationship, both husband and wife are free from feelings of shame, enabling them to give and receive without regulations and without reserve.

In contrast, what results when transparency and trust are found lacking in the sexual relationship?

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SHINING IN THE MIDST OF YOUR MARRIAGE**

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If one partner is not forthcoming, or deceptive, in any area of the marriage, the other will have great difficulty giving their body to their partner without reserve, inhibiting the freedom that otherwise could have been enjoyed.

Hebrews 13:4-5 says, “*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled...let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have...*” (NKJV).

The Greek word for “*undefiled*” is *amiantos*. It means “free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed and debased, or its force and vigor impaired.”¹ In order to gain a greater understanding of what defiles the marriage bed, we must first learn what our Creator had in mind when He created sex. For our purposes, we will devote our study to the relational components of love-making rather than the obvious aspect of procreation (Genesis 1:28).

1. Sex is for oneness (Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 5:31).

As one flesh, man and wife become emotionally, physically, and spiritually bonded. So much so, that God no longer sees them as two separate individuals, but as one being. Sex is intended to create connection and unity, an intertwining of your heart, mind, soul, and strength with your mate.

Consider the following: Will the activity you are considering bring about unity? Will it draw you closer together as man and wife?

Why is it imperative that you are in agreement regarding any sexual act? _____

If the activity does not create unity, but instead pushes you apart, creating distance and discord, it should *not* be practiced. This includes self-gratification, apart from your mate.

2. Sex is for intimate knowledge and understanding (Genesis 4:1).

In this passage, we read that “*Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived*” (NKJV). The Hebrew word for “*knew*” is *yada*, meaning “to learn, to perceive, to discern, to experience, to confess, to consider...to make oneself known.”² This suggests a familiarity, a closeness, an understanding—a depth of intimacy—that no one else can know or share.

Sexual intimacy requires great vulnerability. Will the sexual practice you are considering allow your mate to feel safe and secure in your care? Will it produce greater openness and communication in your relationship?

If you, or your mate feel debased, belittled, embarrassed, ashamed, or insecure while performing the act, it should *not* be practiced.

3. Sex is for pleasure (Genesis 18:12 and Proverbs 5:15, 18-19).

The book, Song of Solomon, is an erotic series of love songs between a man and his wife. While engaged in foreplay *and* while making love, they enjoyed one another and experienced great satisfaction, delight, and joy.

Will the act you are considering provide pleasure and bring satisfaction to you *and* your spouse?

In contrast, will the act cause pain, or bring discomfort to either partner? Is it medically safe? If it is not pleasurable, or if it is unsafe, it should *not* be practiced.

4. Sex is for comfort (2 Samuel 12:24).

In this passage, David consoles his wife through the act of sex. The intimacy they shared brought strength and assurance to their relationship during a time of loss. They each received hope, support, and encouragement in the arms of the other.

Sexual intimacy should not create feelings of discomfort, uneasiness, anxiety, distress, and worry, but rather, feelings of reassurance and ease, appreciation, respect, and love.

Will the act cause you to feel cherished, supported, and secure? If discomfort, uneasiness, and disrespect replace feelings of comfort, the act should *not* be practiced.

5. Sex is for protection (1 Corinthians 7:2, 5).

Regular sexual encounters protect the marriage bed against temptation and attacks of the enemy. However, we must keep in mind that Satan would love nothing more than to destroy the union created while in the act. When considering whether to adopt certain sexual practices, you must always evaluate whether the act, or the inclusion of sexual aids, will promote purity or allow for spiritual compromise. Read 1 John 2:10.

It is important to consider the role sexual sin has played in your marriage. Until healing has occurred, and transparency and trust have been reestablished, some sexual acts could cause your mate to fall back into sin.

If the act does not provide safety and security, if it is not used as a means to guard and protect, if it is no longer a refuge for the two of you, but a playground for the enemy, the act should *not* be practiced.

With the information listed above, at what point does the marriage bed become defiled? (Refer back to the definition listed on page 2.) _____

God intended the marriage bed to be a place of mutual understanding, pleasure, comfort, and protection. We have been granted freedom to explore new ways to enjoy one another, to draw us closer together, and to bring us closer to God. It is when our personal desires supersede the interests of our spouse—making sex a mere act rather than love shared—that we inhibit this freedom.

Read Philippians 2:3-4.

Stumbled

Sexual freedom taken for granted leads to shame and bondage. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. Consider whether the act will bring glory to God. Could you invite God into the practice without feeling a sense of guilt or condemnation? Why, or why not? _____

Read Romans 14:14-23, replacing the word “food” with “sexual acts.” What must we take into consideration before we engage in any sexual practice (v.21)? _____

According to verses 15 and 20, if you engage in an act that grieves your mate, what will happen?

Does this speak love to your mate, or selfishness? How? _____

What sexual acts are considered sinful in your relationship with your spouse according to this passage? (Consider verses 14 and 23.) Review James 4:17. _____

Continue reading in Romans 15:1-6.

First Corinthians 6:12-13 says, “*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any...Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body*” (NKJV).

Interestingly, the Greek word for “*helpful*” in this context means “to bring together.”³ Loosely paraphrased, the apostle Paul says that although you are permitted to engage in certain acts without labeling them sin, they may not be profitable to you or your relationship. In the end they will only bring harm and push you apart.

He further explains that some activities may even bring you under bondage. Before performing any sexual act, ask yourself if it will be profitable to your spiritual life. Will it enslave you? Can you enjoy your partner physically, emotionally, and spiritually without it? If you allow yourself to become mastered by any sexual practice, you will soon find yourself unable to enjoy sexual pleasure apart from it, ultimately devastating your relationship with your mate.

In closing, read Romans 6:12-14 and 1 Corinthians 10:23-24.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Examine your heart in the light of Galatians 5:13-14. What is freedom, specifically in the sexual relationship between man and wife, intended to accomplish?
2. What does it mean to love your spouse without rules and without inhibitions? If you feel that you are unable to do this, what steps can *you* take towards reestablishing trust and transparency?
3. Read Ephesians 4:17-19. Have you grown confused in regard to the immoral practices of the world? Read through the following sexual acts clearly prohibited by God.
 - **Prostitution:** engaging in sex for money (Leviticus 19:29, Deuteronomy 23:17-18, Proverbs 7:6-23, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20).

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- **Rape:** sexual intercourse carried out with force, under the threat of injury, against one's will (Deuteronomy 22:25-27, Judges 19:25).
- **Incest:** sexual intercourse between two closely related persons (Leviticus 18:7-18; 20:11-21).

The sexual acts listed above are considered illicit (unlawful). Sex in public venues, polygamy, and pedophilia are also illegal.

- **Adultery:** sex with someone other than your spouse (Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:20, Proverbs 5:1-23, 1 Corinthians 6:9).

This includes heavy petting, masturbating, oral sex, phone sex, and online sexual chatting with someone other than your spouse.

- **Fornication:** sex between two persons who are not married (Matthew 15:19, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:5).
- **Homosexuality, lesbianism, and bisexuality:** sex with someone of the same gender (Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:24-32).
- **Lust:** unbridled sexual desire for someone who is not your spouse (Matthew 5:27-28, Colossians 3:5, 1 Thessalonians 4:5).
- **Orgies:** sexual encounters involving many people (Romans 13:13, 1 Peter 4:3, Galatians 5:21, Jude 12).

This includes swinging, threesomes, and engaging in sex with your partner while others are present.

- **Bestiality:** sex with animals (Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 18:23, Deuteronomy 27:21).
- **Pornography:** viewing images (drawings, photographs, movies), or reading books that depict erotic behavior, causing sexual excitement. (See verses pertaining to adultery and lust.)

4. Galatians 5:19 says, *“When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, [and] eagerness for lustful pleasure”* (NLT). God's Word does not focus on sexual technique, procedure, position, duration, etc., as the world does, but rather on the love shared between a man and wife.

Has sex become an act to you? If so, how?

When sex becomes an act rather than a relationship, does it become a means to gratify your sinful nature? Why, or why not? Read Romans 6:12-13, 19.

5. How can sexual freedom between a man and wife be used as an opportunity for the flesh?

As was stated earlier, we must decide whether certain acts are prohibited, or permissible within marriage based on *our* convictions in light of its principles.

6. Freedom in the sexual relationship means that the partners are free to do whatever they desire to bring about unity, understanding, comfort, pleasure, and protection. Are the sexual acts you have chosen for your marriage bringing about these results?
7. Theologians remain divided over whether the Scriptures are silent regarding the act of oral sex. Read Song of Solomon 2:3 and 4:16. *“Throughout the Song of Solomon, the word “fruit” refers*

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to the male genitals.” The word “*garden*” is “a poetic reference used...for the vagina.”⁴ Does this change your views of the practice? Why, or why not?

8. When considering whether to incorporate the use of sexual aids, such as vibrators, into your love-making, you must consider the following:

Will acquiring the object require you to compromise your integrity, or your walk with Jesus? Will the object be used together for building oneness? Will it take the place of natural and regular sexual intimacy? Are you able to achieve orgasm apart from the object? If not, have you become mastered by it?

9. God’s Word remains silent on the issue of self-pleasuring (masturbation). Ask yourself whether you can engage in this act without entertaining lustful thoughts. Does this act cultivate the intimate connection needed to maintain a thriving marital relationship? (Look back at Question 6.) Can you invite God into this practice? Why, or why not?

Does genital-pleasuring between you and your husband achieve unity, understanding, comfort, pleasure, and protection? In what ways can you bring about these results when one partner is unable to engage in the act of sexual intercourse due to sickness, injury, menstruation, etc.?

10. Anal sex is not labeled a “sin” between a man and wife, but it is important to consider the medical implications. The vaginal tissue is designed by God for intercourse and childbearing. The anus is designed to expel waste from the system. The anal tissue is thin and can tear easily. If anal sex is a regular practice, the wife runs the risk of worsening hemorrhoids, sustaining a fistula, and contracting bacterial infections, such as Giardia and Chlamydia.

As with any sexual act, we must consider whether the desire to engage in this practice is based on a sexual addiction. Could it lead to one?

11. Fantasy does not include creative and playful sex. However, fantasy and role-playing, go too far when they reduce your mate to an object to fulfill your lusts. Consider Matthew 5:27-28.
12. Read Leviticus 18:19. Sex during menstruation was strictly prohibited during Old Testament times. However, it is not spoken against in the New Testament. How do you feel when your husband approaches you for sex during this time? Are you willing to discuss your feelings with your partner? If you are uncomfortable engaging in sex during menstruation, are you willing to explore alternative methods to meet his sexual needs?
13. First Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 begin with a popular phrase adopted by the Corinthian church. It states, “*All things are lawful for me*” (NKJV). But as we learned, all “things” are not beneficial. What sexual acts have you determined are *not* beneficial to your relationship with your spouse?

¹ Strong, J. (1996). The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order. (electronic ed.) (G283). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

² Baker, Warren and Eugene Carpenter. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament. Chattanooga, Tennessee: AMG Publishers, 2003. 420. (H3045)

³ Strong, J. (1996). The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order. (electronic ed.) (G4851). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

⁴ Dillow, Linda and Lorraine Pintus. Intimate Issues. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Waterbrook Press, 1999. 201.