

Questions about S-E-X

By Harold & Bette Gillogly

Let's talk about sex. We know we are going out on a precarious limb to talk about this subject; but it needs talked about -- in a Biblical context. God is the creator of sex. He designed it as a pure and beautiful gift to married couples. God says in Hebrews 13:4 that the marriage bed is "pure" or "undefiled," which means "completely free from any contamination." The Holy Spirit through the writer of Hebrews, uses this *same word* in chapter 7 to describe Jesus Christ Himself. This means that, according to God, we can no more call marital intimacy dirty than we can call Jesus Christ dirty. So to talk about this important, God created gift is worth the risk.

The following questions are just a few we have been asked during our many years of conducting marriage enrichment conferences. In this "Seeds For Growth," we would like to handle some of the most frequently asked questions about sex. These are excerpted from our *Experiencing Oneness* book. Maybe you've wondered about some of these questions yourself.

How can you include God in your sex life?

God does not shut His eyes in embarrassment when married couples make love. He's right there; and He approves. He declares in Hebrews 13:4 that *the marriage bed is pure or undefiled*. If you are following His principles of real love, you don't need to be ashamed to make love in His presence. As Christians, we need to be more aware and acknowledge His place in our marriage...even in our bedrooms. Have you ever prayed together during afterglow? It's a wonderful time to pray, a time of intense feelings of closeness. It's a good time to express your thanks to the Lord for one another, for the precious gift of your mate and for the intimacy you can share.

What is "improper" when sexually relating to your mate, in terms of "Let the marriage bed be undefiled"?

There are definitely certain sexual behaviors that are strictly forbidden by Scripture: adultery, fornication, incest, prostitution, bestiality, and homosexuality and lesbianism. If any of these are brought into a marriage, the "marriage bed" will be defiled — become impure. Besides these obvious sins, however, we must also take into consideration unloving, selfish behavior. Do we bring self-gratifying demands into our marriage bed? Do we lay guilt on our mates when they don't meet our sexual expectations? Are we rough, rude or unkind with our partners? We must be careful to not allow selfishness to defile our marriage bed, as well as obviously deviant behaviors.

You mentioned that if one partner is overly aggressive about wanting sex, the other one will retreat even more. Well, what if the aggressive partner backs off and the passive partner still isn't interested?

Since we don't know the particulars of this situation, we need to ask some questions of both the overly aggressive and overly passive mates. First, some questions for the overly aggressive partner: How often do you give your partner signals that you want sex? Is your desire frequency overwhelming to your mate? How do you treat your mate during the day? Are you disrespectful and rude, or loving and tender? Have you studied the art of love-making, and do you spend enough time in foreplay, lovingly trying to meet your mate's needs? Do you try to make your mate feel guilty when she/he does not respond sexually? Is there unresolved resentment and anger between you? Do you help your mate, without being asked, with burdensome chores that make her/him too tired to make love? Any of these things, and

many more we don't have room to mention, can adversely affect your mate's sexual response. But **you do have control** over every possibility we asked about. You need to examine yourself and your motives, honestly admit what you need to change, and

Some in the church have been taught that sex is "dirty" – Is it?

then do something about it.

Now, some questions for the overly passive mate: Were you taught sex is dirty and "nice girls" or "nice boys" don't do "things like that"? Were you taught women aren't supposed to like sex? Do you immediately shut down erotic thoughts? Do you feel God made women to be sexually passive — that's just the way it is? Are you harboring resentment toward your mate? Do you see withholding sex as a means to gain control in one area of your relationship? Is sexual intimacy a priority to you? Do you ever have orgasm when you and your husband make love? So many questions to take into account; so many possibilities that can affect the way you view sex. Please note: some of these questions were directed to wives, but some were directed to **both**. Although sexual passivity affects more women than men, it is not exclusively a female problem.

God intended sex for pleasure. It is His gift to both husbands and wives. It's not a "dirty" gift — it is a **beautiful gift**. The trouble is that the world has distorted God's gift and tried to make it look ugly. Perhaps some of that distortion has affected you. Whatever your particular situation, if as a couple, you cannot find mutual, workable solutions for an unsatisfactory sex life, we urge you not to be content with status quo. Seek help. There are many books available with

S-E-X Questions (cont')

detailed solutions for specific sexual problems: books like **INTENDED FOR PLEASURE** by Ed and Gaye Wheat, **THE GIFT OF SEX** by Clifford and Joyce Penner and **THE INTIMATE MARRIAGE** by Howard and Charlotte Clinebell. If you need more help than books can give, then we encourage you to seek Christian sexual counseling, which has an extremely high success rate. Your sexual happiness is very important to the One who made you a sexual being. Don't snub His gift.

What is "normal" in terms of how often a couple should have sex?

"Normal" frequency is how often making love is **mutually pleasurable** for each couple. According to Dr. Ed Wheat, two to three times per week is "average," but normal and average are two different things. Also, "normal" doesn't necessarily stay static throughout your married life. Lots of factors — outside stresses, children, aging — can change your normal frequency in different periods of your life. However, your "normal" in each of these periods, remains what is mutually satisfying and pleasurable to you as a couple.

The number of times you and your mate have sex will even change from week to week. As you are already aware, women have hormone cycles. Female hormones do more than cause menstruation once a month; they also cause changes in desire. The simplest way to explain a woman's monthly hormone cycle is to describe it in terms of seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. If hormones are cooperating, this is also the weekly sequence of a

woman's passion. Spring: passion begins to blossom after menstruation. Summer: passion is hot. Fall: passion begins to slow down. And winter: menstruation puts passion on hold. Each week to ten days is another season. Not all women follow the same sequence of seasons each month, so we recommend, Wives, that you carefully note your seasons on a calendar for several months. It's extremely freeing for couples to know what season the wife is in. As we get to know ourselves and our mates better, it gives us more understanding and acceptance of one another.

How do you suggest working a sexual life with intimacy around children?

It is imperative to a healthy marriage that you consider your sexual intimacy a **priority**. It isn't easy to maintain a passionate love-life when you have active, nosy children, but it is possible. In fact, if you really want to be good parents, the best thing you can do for your children is to maintain a solid husband-wife relationship. This is how you give them real **security**. They need to know that Mommy and Daddy truly love each other. They also need to know that your marriage relationship is **primary**. This means except for emergencies, your children should not sleep in your bed. If they are ill and come into your room during the night, comfort them then put them to sleep back in their own bed. If they need further attention, go to them — even sleeping in their bed if necessary.

You should also put a good lock on your bedroom door. And teach your children that Mommy and Daddy's

room is your special room and that sometimes you need private time together without them. This is not harmful at all for your children. On the contrary, it is very healthy for them.

One is a morning person — the other a night person. The "owl" wants to make love at night when the "dove" is bushed. The "dove" wants to make love in the morning when the "owl" can hardly get their eyes open. How can sex and intimacy work itself into such an environment?

What do you think about afternoons? Seriously, I can remember being given a few quarters to go to movies as a child. The point is, sexual intimacy must be made a priority in our marriages. We need to **make** time for it and for one another, even if we must go to great lengths to do so. It's more important than Monday night football or movie of the week, so turn the TV off early and make love before the dove is bushed. A nice back rub can go a long way to revitalize that sweet bird. Sexual intimacy is also more important than forty more winks, so splash some water on your face or take a shower to wake up a little earlier. Our sleeping patterns are habits — habits we can vary a little bit if it's important enough to do so. Sex and intimacy **can not work itself** into our relationship. **We** have to work it in.

We hope these questions and answers have been helpful to you. If you have a question about sex, we encourage you to send it to us. If we don't know the answer, we'll try to find it.

Growing Toward Oneness Marriage Ministries provides books, CD's and other marriage resources and services to enrich your marriage.

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