Premarital Counseling
Session 3: A Theology of Sexuality

Instructions: Be sure to finish the Scripture study, exercises, sermons, and readings before Session 3.

Key Ideas

1. Physical attraction and physical intimacy are a gift from God and a blessing to be enjoyed in marriage.

2. A healthy biblical sexuality involves physical, emotional, relational and spiritual intimacy. It’s a package that can’t be bifurcated.

3. A couple’s sex life is the picture/sign of the emotional, relational, and spiritual state of the marital union.
**Scripture Study Guide for a Biblical Sexuality**

*Instructions:* Read Song of Solomon 1-8; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 1 Cor 6:12-20; 7:1-7. Below you will find a list of verses and questions that help you think about the text. For each verse, explain briefly what the verse means and how it applies to marriage. (Note that I’ve only included a few lines to write on because I want you to be brief!)

Song of Solomon 1-8

*Questions:* What do you learn physical attraction, physical love and relational intimacy by reading to the dialogue between the lover and the beloved?

*Explanation:* __________________________________________________________

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*Application to marriage:* _________________________________

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1 Peter 3:1-7

*Questions:* How is true beauty expressed in this passage? What is most “precious” or “worthy” to God (v. 4)? Contrast the two kinds of adornment - the first in v. 3 and the other in v. 5? What’s the connection between hope and beauty (“adorn themselves”) and submission (v. 5)?

*Explanation:* __________________________________________________________

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*Application to marriage:* _________________________________

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1 Cor 6:12-20

Questions: There are two kinds of union in vs. 15-17. What are these two unions and why are they significant? Why does Paul bring up the “one flesh” principle (1 Cor 6:16; Gen 2:24) and how does this relate to sex? Who “owns” your body (vs. 19-20)? What implication does this “ownership” have for how you use your body?

Explanation: 

Application to marriage: 

1 Cor 7:1-7

Questions: Why should each man have a wife and each wife have a husband (vs. 2-3)? What does Paul mean by “conjugal rights” or “marital duty” (v. 3)? What does Paul mean by a spouse having “authority over” his or her spouse’s body (v. 4)? What implication does that have for your sexual relationship? When can you “deprive each other” of sex, and when can you not (v. 5)?

Explanation: 

Application to marriage: 

Exercises for Biblical Sexuality

Part 1. Every couple must make decisions about what level of discussion about sex is appropriate before marriage. Your conscience will be a good guide, and both partners should be respectful of the other person’s conscience. The questions listed below are intended to explore background factors that can affect a sexual relationship in marriage. Remember: a loving relationship—built on Christ and characterized by sacrifice—is the most important determinant in a good sexual relationship.

Take time to answer the following statements/questions. Do this individually. Then take turns sharing your response to each question. Be as open as you are able to be at this time.

1. Things I remember hearing, being taught, or have sensed about what it means to be a man/woman are (list at least 3):

2. Things I remember hearing or being taught about sexual intimacy are (list at least 3):

3. What connections do I see between the above two lists and my attitude toward sexual intercourse and my attitude toward my sexuality?

4. Were you ever physically abused or raped? If so, have you sought counsel to help you work through the past trauma? Are you fearful about how this might affect your sexual relationship with your fiancé?
5. Do you struggle with pornography? If you currently struggling (or have struggled in the recent past), do you have weekly accountability with another person? (Warning: Don’t tell your fiancé the details about your past struggles. If you share anything about your past, speak more generally. The details won’t help him or her at all.)

6. A fear or hesitation I have about sex is.....

7. One of the things I find most attractive about you is.....

8. Because of God’s love for us, sexual intimacy....

9. Because God gives sex as a pleasurable gift for couples to enjoy, we.....
Part. 2 Interview with a Married Friend

You are encouraged to find a married friend of the same gender who you can ask questions in preparation for your marriage. We particularly want you to talk about sex (questions in bold below), but we figured since you are making the effort to find someone, you might as well ask them about other aspects of their marriage. You’ll find below suggested questions. Please feel free to ask lots of other questions that you have in mind. Since premarital counseling is done by a pastor (who is a male!), we’ve found this application exercise to be especially helpful for women to get perspective and guidance from a married woman in our congregation.

Questions for the Groom to Ask a Married Man:

- Can I share with you some of my fears in having sex?
- What is the key to marital fidelity?
- What do you feel are the ingredients for a good sexual relationship?
- Is there anything else you want to share with me about sex in marriage that will help me as I prepare to be wed?

If you have time, ask some of the following questions...

- How does your individual relationship with Christ affect your relationship with your wife?
- Do you believe divorce is an option? What effect has this belief had on your commitment to your wife?
- On leaving and cleaving: How did you develop independence from your parents? How did your relationship with your parents change after marriage?
- How would you describe your responsibility in leading in the marriage? How does your understanding of leadership in marriage compare or contrast with Scripture?
- What have been some of your joys and struggles in leading your wife?
- What are some examples of how you love your wife as Christ loves the church?
- What are a few practical ways in which you manage and shepherd your family?
- What does family worship look like in your family?
- How do you and your wife share responsibility for your children (i.e., care of children, disciplines, decisions about school, etc.)?
- How do you keep romance alive with your wife?
- How did your communication evolve from your engagement period through the first few years of your marriage?
- What advice would you give me as I try to learn to lead my wife in communicating? In light of your strengths and weaknesses in communication, what would you tell me to focus on or avoid in communicating with my wife?
- How do you encourage each other to communicate? When do you usually talk to each other?
• How do you solve conflict?
• Do you have a budget? How did you arrive at the budget you are presently using?
• How do you determine the major purchases to make?
• How have you treated debt and credit card purchases? What advice would you give in this area?
• How have your personal views affected your decisions in spending, giving, and savings?
• Who pays the bills and why?
• Do you pray together?
• How do you hold one another accountable?
• Do you ever study Scripture together?
• Is there anything that we have not covered that has had an impact on your marriage that you would like to share?

Be sure to thank the person for taking the time to talk with you and ask them to pray for you and your future wife. It would also be a kind thing for you to ask your friend how you and your fiancé could pray for their marriage.

Questions for the Bride to Ask a Married Woman:
• Can I share with you some of my fears in having sex?
• What is the key to marital fidelity?
• What do you feel are the ingredients for a good sexual relationship?
• Is there anything else you want to share with me about sex in marriage that will help me as I prepare to be wed?

If you have time, ask some of the following questions...
• How does your individual relationship with Christ affect your relationship with your husband?
• Do you believe divorce is an option? What effect has this belief had on your commitment to your wife?
• On leaving and cleaving: How did you develop independence from your parents? How did your relationship with your parents change after marriage?
• How would you define submission? How does your definition of submission compare or contrast with Scripture?
• How do you work to be a “suitable helper” (cf. Gen 2:18) for your husband? What have been some of your joys and struggles in following/submitting to your husband?
• How did you feel about submission before you got married? Contrast that with how you feel about it right now?
• What does family worship look like in your family?
• How do you and your husband share responsibility for your children (i.e., care of children, disciplines, decisions about school, etc.)?
• How do you keep romance alive with your husband?
• How did your communication evolve from your engagement period through the first few years of your marriage?
• What advice would you give me as I try to learn to communicate with my future husband? In light of your strengths and weakness in communication, what would you tell me to focus on or avoid in communicating with my fiancé?
• How do you encourage each other to communicate? When do you usually talk to each other?
• How do you solve conflict?
• Do you have a budget? How did you arrive at the budget you are presently using?
• How do you determine the major purchases to make?
• How have you treated debt and credit card purchases? What advice would you give in this area?
• How have your personal views affected your decisions in spending, giving, and savings?
• Who pays the bills and why?
• Do you pray together?
• How do you hold one another accountable?
• Do you ever study Scripture together?
• Is there anything that we have not covered that has had an impact on your marriage that you would like to share?

*Be sure to thank the person for taking the time to talk with you and ask them to pray for you and your future husband. It would also be a kind thing for you to ask your friend how you and your fiancé could pray for their marriage.*
Sermons

Try to listen to at least one sermon from this page.

From CHBC audio (www.capitolhillbaptist.org):
- Mark Dever – Wisdom of the Married – The Message of the Song of Songs
- Al Mohler – An Evangelical Theology of Sex – Genesis 2

From Desiring God (www.desiringgod.org):
- John Piper’s – Sexual Relations within Marriage – Hebrew 13:4–5

From First Baptist Grand Cayman (www.fbc.org.ky):
- Thabiti Anyabwile – A Study of the Song of Solomon

Readings

Ricucci’s Love that Lasts: Ch. 7-8
For the Man: CJ Mahaney’s Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God