

FROM IDOL TO BLESSING: HOW GRACE TRANSFORMS OUR SEXUALITY PART 2

How Can You Make Your Sexual Relationship in Marriage All That it Should Be? The Gospel of Grace Is the Key to Sexual Intimacy in Marriage

A. First pursue intimacy in your relationship with God. *1 Thess 4:3-5; Prov 4:5-9, 23; 7:4; Gen 39:9; Prov 4:23;*

Ps 1

1. Find your greatest delight in Him. *Isa 55:1-2*
2. Continually renew your mind through God's Word. *Rom 12:1-2; Phil 4:8-9*
3. Fill your heart with the gospel which should result in your reflecting God's grace to your spouse. *Eph 5:2; 4:32; 1 John 4:19*
4. Don't look to your spouse to meet needs that only the Lord can meet.
5. God uses marriage, including sex, as an instrument in your spiritual growth.

B. Build the intimacy of your marriage relationship.

1. Almost all sexual problems in marriage are merely symptoms of other issues.
2. Marriage is a lifelong covenant of commitment. *Gen 2:18-25*

3. The husband is the loving initiator in all areas, sacrificially giving himself to his wife.

Eph 5:25-33; 1 Pet 3:7; 1 John 4:19; Prov 31:28

4. The wife joyfully embraces her role as helper and submits to her husband's leadership.

Eph 5:22-24; 1 Pet 3:1-7; Prov 12:4

5. Strive for open communication: listening and speaking in love - lovers must first be friends.

Song 5:16; Prov 17:17; Eph 4:29

6. Keep short accounts (confessing and forgiving sin), not letting the sun go down on your anger (lest you give the devil an opportunity). *Eph 4:26-27, 31-32*

7. Avoid temptations which could threaten your fidelity to one another.

- God has given the marriage bed as a safeguard against temptation. *1 Cor 7:5; Prov 5:15-19; Song 1:2*

- Maintain strict propriety in relationship with members of the opposite sex - agree on expectations. *1 Tim 5:2*

8. If you are having trouble, seek godly counsel from a wise, mature couple.

C. Practice "grace sex" rather than "law/works sex".

1. Law/works sex gives your spouse what you judge that they have earned - punishments and rewards.

2. Grace sex gives to your spouse freely, just as God has given to you - treating him/her better than he/she deserves.

3. In a great marriage each spouse is trying to outdo the other in grace, serving him/her so that he/she has the best deal going! *Phil 2:3-4; Mark 10:42-45*

4. Deal graciously with the weaknesses of your spouse. *Rom 15:1-3, 7*

5. Apply 1 Cor 13:4-7 to your love life.

D. Think first of how to bring refreshment and satisfaction to your spouse, rather than seeking self-gratification. *Phil 2:3-4; Prov 5:18-19; Deut 24:5; Eccl 9:9; Song 1:2, 13-16; 7:1-10; 4:1-7; 5:10-16; 7:6-9*

1. God has given your sexuality primarily for his/her enjoyment. *1 Cor 7:3-5*

2. Continue to kindle the romance in your marriage.

3. Watch out for the "little foxes" which can spoil your vineyard: busyness, exhaustion, laziness, sexual sabotage, a child-centered home. *Song 2:15*

4. Plan time together. *Prov 21:5*

5. Keep learning! *1 Pet 3:7*

E. Understand the differences between male and female perspectives on sex. *1 Pet 3:7*

1. Men tend to be more visual.

2. Women tend to focus more on the relationship.

3. God has made men to initiate love and women to respond.

4. One of the greatest needs of a wife is to be a delight to her husband in every way.

5. Men tend to be very sensitive about feeling rejected.

6. Men are like microwaves and women are like crockpots.

7. Women are more complex sexually and are more easily put off.

8. Understand your spouse's sensitivity to certain issues: privacy, noise, hygiene, sleep, words, body insecurity, etc. *Eph 5:3-4*

Books

Alcorn, Randy, *The Purity Principle*.

Dillow, Linda, *Intimacy Ignited*.

Dillow, L., Pintus, L., *Intimate Issues*.

Harris, Joshua, *Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is)*.

Harvey, Dave, *When Sinners Say I Do*.

Keller, Tim, *The Meaning of Marriage*.

Mahaney, C.J., *Sex, Romance and the Glory of God*.

Piper, J., Taylor, J., *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*.

Priolo, Lou, *The Complete Husband*.

Wheat, Ed, MD., *Intended for Pleasure*.

Audios

Newheiser, Jim. "From Idol to Blessing."

Supplemental Resources

Newheiser, Jim. "From Idol to Blessing Questions."