

TALK ABOUT IT

What formed your view of human sexuality as you were growing up? How close was your view to the biblical idea that sex is a good gift from God when it is expressed in the marriage relationship between a man and a woman?

DVD TEACHING NOTES

Introduction: The Bible and sexuality

The power of sexual fulfillment and the danger of sexual addictions

- How sex is spiritually formative in a marriage:
1. A healthy sexual relationship creates a bridge for greater spiritual, emotional, and relational intimacy
  2. A healthy sexual relationship grows a spirit of giving
  3. A healthy sexual relationship teaches us about building hearts of faithfulness

DVD DISCUSSION

1. Read Genesis 2:22 – 25; Song of Songs chapter 7; and Proverbs 5:15 – 19. Some Christians view sex as something to be ignored or avoided, or they believe that “good” Christians don’t talk about such things. How does the teaching of the Bible confront this perspective on human sexuality?
  
2. Gary says, “A man who is sexually fulfilled is a better father, husband, worker, and even a better Christian.” He says, “The reverse is also true. One of the best ways to zap a man’s strength is to give him a sexual addiction or for him to be involved in any kind of sexual expression outside of his marriage.” How do you respond to these statements, and what are some of the implications if Gary is right?

*God doesn't turn his eyes when a married couple goes to bed. It only stands to reason that we shouldn't turn our eyes from God when we share intimate moments with our spouse.*

3. Of the many spiritual benefits to a healthy sexual relationship between a husband and a wife, one is that the physical urge for sexual intimacy becomes a motivator for keeping the spiritual, relational, and emotional parts of the marriage healthy and growing. In God's design, a man never feels closer to his wife than right after they have experienced sexual intercourse. How does this reality speak to a husband's needs and motivation for being intimate with his wife? How does this speak to the way a wife understands what drives and motivates her husband?

4. Between the messages being pounded into our minds by a sex-saturated culture and our own tendency toward selfishness, it would be easy to view sex as a purely self-serving activity. But God sees this time of intimacy between a husband and wife as an opportunity for us to grow as servants. What are some ways a husband and wife can serve one another in the sexual area of their relationship, and how might a commitment to sexual servanthood grow a marriage?

*The only sexual life a Christian spouse can legitimately enjoy is the romantic life a spouse chooses to provide. This makes manipulation and rejection ever-present specters in the marital bed. Anything denied physically becomes an absolute denial, because there is no other legitimate outlet. (On the other hand, placing an unbearable sexual burden on a spouse in an attempt to meet other, unfulfilled needs can also be a manipulating abuse of power.)*

5. Read John 13:2-5, 12-16. Jesus was the most powerful person to ever walk this earth, and he chose to serve. How does his example speak to the way a Christian husband and wife should treat each other in every area of their relationship, including in the bedroom?

6. Respond to this statement: "In a marriage relationship, whoever wants sex the least has the most power in bed." What does this say to the spouse who wants sex more and to the spouse who wants sex less?

*Becoming more like Jesus is the essence of Christianity and none of us can say with any degree of sincerity that we have cornered the market on being a servant. Our marriages provide opportunities every day for us to be pushed further in this direction.*

7. Gary says the most typical sexual sin for a man is to become a voyeur (looking at and lusting after many women, desiring to be satisfied by women in general and not just one woman — his wife). And the most typical sexual sin for a woman is to become an exhibitionist (dressing immodestly and becoming flirtatious because she wants to be adored by men in general and not just one man — her husband). If a husband or wife is engaging in this kind of behavior, what are some of the ways this might impact the marriage both inside and outside of the bedroom?

8. Just as snacks before dinner can ruin our appetite for good food, filling our eyes with impure images or our minds with romantic novels or movies can ruin our appetite for the intimacy of the marriage bed. How can we cut off the sources of unhealthy sexuality our society places in front of us so that our hunger for intimacy with our spouse will grow?

*Every hunger that entices us in the flesh is an exploitation of a need that can be better met by God. The only context for godly sex is marital sex.*

## CLOSING

Take time as a group (or as couples) to pray in some of the following directions:

- Thank you for the good gift of sexuality and for the perfect setting to express it, the marriage relationship.
- Help us to see that sexual intimacy is a bridge to growing closer in every area of our relationship, including our emotional and spiritual connections.
- Teach us how to be generous servants in how we care for our spouses in every area of our marriage, including in the bedroom.

*To fully embrace marital sexuality and all that God designed it for, couples must bring their Christianity into the bedroom and break down the wall between their physical and spiritual intimacy.*

## BETWEEN SESSIONS

### COUPLE'S CONVERSATION AND PRAYER

Take time before your next group meeting to talk and pray together about one or more of these topics:

- **Talk About It:** Talk with your spouse about one or two big lessons that hit you during the DVD and discussion time with your group. Have an honest conversation about what will lead to a stronger sexual connection between you. Use some of the questions below to guide your conversation. Remember, be honest, but gentle.

What do I do that makes you feel loved and valued?

What makes you feel distant and disconnected from me?

When we are sexually intimate, what brings you the greatest physical pleasure?

Is there anything we do that is not pleasurable or that makes you feel uncomfortable?

How can I serve you more consistently in the bedroom and out of the bedroom?

- **Pray About It:** Together ask God to help you see sexuality and sexual intimacy through his eyes ... as a good gift to be enjoyed in the context of marriage. Ask him to bring to light any unhealthy behavior or life-pattern in relationship to your sexuality, and that you'll have eyes to see and a heart that is ready to repent and turn from these actions. Ask Jesus to help you learn from his example of humble service. Pray that you will learn to serve your spouse with tender care, inside and outside of the bedroom.

- **Read and Reflect:** Read some portions of Song of Songs to each other. Husbands, read the following portions to your bride: 4:1 - 7 and 7:1 - 9. Wives, read the following passages to your groom: 2:3 - 13 and 5:10 - 16. How might you express some of the ideas in these passages in language more appropriate to our time? How did it feel to speak words of deep affection and intimacy to each other?

### ACTIVITIES

Try one or more of the following suggestions:

- **Personal Exercise:** This week, make a point of watching your patterns and behavior. Men: Identify when your eyes wander to other women, when you are drawn to a TV show, movie, or Internet site that might lessen your appetite for your spouse. Women: Notice when you read novels, watch movies, or indulge in anything that is designed to fill your longing for romance. As you identify these patterns, offer them to God and seek to cut off these sources that kill your desire for the true love of your life — your spouse.

- **Journaling Exercise:** In a notebook or on the page provided at the end of this session, reflect on these questions: If God looked at nothing other than how I treat his daughter in bed (or for women, how you treat his son in bed) would he say that I am a mature Christian operating with the virtues of Christ — love, patience, purity, kindness, and generosity? If he only looked at this part of my life, would God be pleased?

- **Personal Prayer:** Confess where you have crossed lines with your sexuality. If you have become a voyeur or an exhibitionist, even in a "small" way, admit this to God and ask for his grace. Pray also for the power of the Holy Spirit to help you live in holiness and purity. Pray that the process of cutting off sinful patterns and

