**Biblical Principles for Physical Intimacy**

Today, we live in a culture that has completely confused and degraded God’s pure blessing of physical intimacy between a man and woman in marriage. Society has moved so far from what God intended that, for many, physical intimacy is merely a means to selfish pleasure. As is so often the case, God’s ways are not man’s ways nor are His thoughts like our thoughts.

It is very important then, that we approach this study with the knowledge and conviction that physical intimacy between husband and wife is God’s idea, not mans’. Therefore, we need to understand His principles for this area of marriage which God intended for our pleasure and good.

It will be our goal in this lesson to “Renew” our thinking and bring it into a Biblical context for proper study and application in our marriage relationships. We must apply the teachings of God’s Word to guide us to prevent problems and discover answers for problems when they occur. There are several principles we will consider. The first principle is:

**I. Physical Intimacy is Pure and Holy .**

**A.** Physical intimacy was created by God Before sin.

*“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it”* Genesis 1:27-28a

*“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”* Genesis 1:31

1. At the end of days 3, 4, and 5 God called His work, “Good.”

2. On day six of creation, God created sexual human beings with differences based on their gender making them male and female.

3. What was God’s view of man’s sexuality based on Genesis 1:31?

*“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was Very Good .”*

**B.** Physical Intimacy is still called honorable by God After man sinned.

*“Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”* Hebrews 13:4

1. Intimacy in marriage is pure and holy – God made it that way. But any sexual activity outside of marriage brings one under divine judgment.

2. God designed life such that the ultimate delights of physical intimacy can only be experienced in marriage. The real delights of pleasing God in this area require the commitment and intimacy found only in the covenant of marriage.

**C.** Any other viewof physical intimacy is A Sinful View .

Do you view intimacy in marriage to be as pure and holy as …

* praying?
* reading God’s word?
* preaching?
* giving?
* teaching a Sunday School class?

If not, you have a wrong view of physical intimacy. God calls it very good, pure, and honorable.

2nd Principle:

**II. Physical Intimacy in Marriage Should be Kept in Proper Perspective**

**A.** In God' eyes sexual intercourse (“legal” or illicit) does not produce a marriage.

In John 4:16-18 Jesus spoke to a woman at a well …

*“He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and* ***the one whom you now have is not your husband."*** John 4:16-18

**B.** Unity in marriage involves more than being one physically.

1. Physical intimacy is not what makes a marriage successful.

2. Before sexual unity, there must be commitment, companionship, and spiritual oneness. These are essential to a God-honouring physical relationship.

**C.** Although physical intimacy is not the basis of marriage, it is Very Important .

1. It should be a very prominent part of marriage.

(Consider the Song of Solomon)

2. It should be the culmination of a loving relationship in all areas of marriage.

*What can you do to develop a deep intimate relationship on levels other than physical?*

3rd Principle:

**III. The Goal of Physical Intimacy is to be a blessing to Your Spouse (Meeting One Another’s Desires).**

(the goal of Biblical love is to give; not to get /// illustration: “5 love languages” = unbiblical!!!)

**A.** The command is given by God in 1 Corinthians 7:3 (NKJV):

*“Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.”*

To whom is this command given? What are the implications of this? *(to both!!!)*

1. Your goal is *giving* to satisfy the other person, not *getting* to satisfy self. The primary goal of physical intimacy is blessing your spouse.

2. The word, “Render” … is a command to give to the other fully, completely, without reluctance, hesitation or inhibition.

3. “Affection due her” … a duty with the idea of doing good to the other person.

It’s a good that results from physical intimacy. He is to satisfy her desires – it is affection given for her benefit. So the goal is giving to satisfy her, not getting to satisfy self. (This is the antithesis of what our world seeks after!)

4. The wife has the same command. She has the responsibility to bless her husband by giving herself to him.

**B.** This principle is also taught by the definition of love.

1. Based on the following verses, how would one define “love”?

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . .”* Jo. 3:16

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”* Ephesians 5:25 *(Love = Giving!)*

2. The greatest pleasure in physical intimacy comes from giving!

a. Giving in order to get is selfish

b. Jesus Christ said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

c. Paul reiterated this truth in Acts 20:35

d. “What is the personal benefit of the relationship?”

i. Satisfaction of pleasing God and your partner

ii. Receiving physical pleasure as a by-product of pleasing your partner—true for both husband and wife.

3. What should be our response then to anything outside the boundaries of marriage that stimulates the sexual desire?

“*For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.”* 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

*Based on this definition of love (i.e. love is “giving”), why would a person’s involvement in the following areas be wrong and displeasing to God?*

* *Pornography*
* *Masturbation*

*Note: Masturbation builds selfish habits that will produce difficulties in marriage. In the fantasies that are a part of masturbation, other people are controlled for personal benefit. A life then is built around self-gratification rather than giving to another.*

* *Homosexuality*

4th Principle:

IV. God Has Created Both Husband and Wife with Equal Ability to Satisfy Each Other.

*“The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.”* 1 Corinthians 7:4

The word, “*Authority*,” means “Control.” The principle is that each person does not possess independent control over his/her own body.

**A.** This means both the husband and the wife are to be initiating in the area of intimacy.

What has the world typically said about who the initiator should be in a relationship?

**B.** Physical intimacy in marriage is to be equal and reciprocal.

1. Requesting physical affection is not forbidden, but demanding is forbidden.

A Test: If you become upset because your “request” was not fulfilled, it was a demand, not a request. Your focus was on yourself, not your spouse.

2. What about different levels of desire?

a. God’s Word instructs you to focus on satisfying your partner, rather than focusing on your own level of desire.

b. To refuse to seek your partner’s satisfaction is to violate God’s commands.

5th Principle

**V. Pleasure in marital intimacy is not sinful and forbidden but rather is assured and encouraged.**

“. . . *rejoice in the wife of your youth … be exhilarated always with her love.”* Pro. 5:18-19

The word “*wife*” teaches that real sexual delight can be found only in marriage. All attempts, in thought or deed, to find satisfaction outside marriage will be unsuccessful and judged by God.

**A.** To delight in the gift of physical intimacy is right and pleasing to God.

Consider: The Song of Solomon

**B.** To refuse intimacy in marriage is to deprive or defraud your spouse

“*Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”* 1 Corinthians 7:5

To “*deprive*” means to withhold or avoid through deceit or dishonesty.

**C.** When there is abstinence, it is to be by mutual consent.

This is not one person refusing the other or one person withholding intimacy from the other to punish him/her or because one is upset with the other.

Rather,

1. Both should agree - mutual consent.

2. There should be a specific period of time, predetermined; prearranged.

3. There should be specific purpose – such as devoting yourselves to prayer.

4. Then, there should be renewed physical intimacy.

Resources: Exemplary Husband, chapter Eleven

& The Excellent Wife, chapter Eleven to emphasize these principles.