

The Meaning of Marriage *Discussion Guide*

CHAPTER 8: SEX AND MARRIAGE

Introduction

NOTE:

Groups often divide by gender for this session. It can make it easier for people to open up.

Sex can be one of the best parts of marriage, but it can also be one of the biggest sources of conflict. We enter into marriage with all kinds of ideas and expectations regarding sex. Sometimes those expectations are unrealistic. When that's the case, the reality can be devastating—so much so that it can harm the connection and intimacy in all other aspects of the marriage relationship. So, what does it look like to pursue a healthy and satisfying sexual relationship within the context of marriage?

Discussion Questions

1. As you read the chapter, what stood out most?
2. Before marriage, how did you view sex?
3. Keller writes, "... sex is primarily a way to know God and build community, and, if you use it for those things *rather* than for your own personal satisfaction, it will lead to greater fulfillment than you can imagine." Respond to that statement. How does it influence the way you think about sex in your marriage?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 7:3-4. What do you think it means that a husband or a wife doesn't have "authority over" his or her own body?
5. In what ways do you and your spouse view sex differently?

For the Ride Home

Talk about this question on your way home:

What is one thing you can do in the next week to connect emotionally and sexually?

Follow through on the idea you came up with when discussing the question for the ride home. Make it a priority.

Exercise

NOTE:

Encourage your couples to follow through on this exercise. The conversation may be awkward at first, open and honest with each other about sex is vital to a healthy marriage.

Set aside an hour sometime in the next week to discuss these questions with your spouse:

1. *What do you need in order to be in the mood for sex?*
2. *Do you feel comfortable initiating sex? Why or why not?*
3. *How often do you prefer or expect sex?*
4. *What sexual activities do you most enjoy?*
5. *Are there specific sexual acts that make you uncomfortable?*
6. *How can you each contribute to making your sexual relationship more satisfying?*

Moving Forward

Sex isn't just an appetite. It's not dirty or something to be ashamed of. It's not strictly a private matter. Sex is a uniting act. It is an essential part of the way a man and a woman become "one flesh" in marriage. When a married couple has a healthy sex life, they're able to express all of themselves to each other, to be completely vulnerable and fully committed to the relationship.

Changing Your Mind

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.

1 Corinthians 7:3-4

