

Biblical Principles Governing Sex

- 1) Sexual relations within marriage are holy and good. God encourages intimate relations and warns against their cessation (1 Cor. 7:5).
- 2) Pleasure in sexual relations is both healthy and expected (Prov. 5:15-19).
- 3) Sexual pleasure is to be guided by the principle that one's sexuality is to be other-oriented ("rights" over one's body are given in marriage to the other party; Phil. 2:3-4).
- 4) Sexual relations are to be regular and normal. No exact number of times per week is right and correct, but the biblical principle is that both parties are to provide adequate sexual satisfaction so that both "burning" (sexual desire) and temptation to find satisfaction elsewhere are avoided (1 Cor. 7:9).
- 5) The principle of satisfaction means that each party is to provide sexual enjoyment as frequently as the other party desires. Other biblical principles (moderation, seeking to please another rather than oneself, etc.) also come into play. Consideration of one's spouse is to guide one's requests for sexual relations.
- 6) In accordance with the principle of "rights," there is to be no sexual bargaining between married persons ("I'll not have sex with you if you..."). Neither party has the right to make such bargains.
- 7) Sexual relations are equal and reciprocal. The Bible does not give the man superior rights to the woman or the woman superior rights to the man. Mutual stimulation and mutual initiation of relations are legitimate (See the Song of Solomon).
- 8) Whatever is honoring to God and natural, safe, pleasing, enjoyable, satisfying to both is acceptable (Hb. 13:4-5). The *body* of each belongs to the other (1 Cor. 7:4). Neither should demand from the other what is painful, harmful, objectionable, or distasteful to him or her.
- 9) Ultimately, sin is anything that does not proceed from faith (Rm. 14:23). So guard your sexual relations in marriage by not doing anything that does not proceed from faith. That is, do those acts in your marital sexual relations that come from confidence it will honor God and build up your marriage.

Source: Adapted from Dr. Daniel Akin; #9 is adapted from John Piper, *Momentary Marriage*.

Typical Causes of Sexual Problems

- 1) Inexperience plus unreasonable expectations.** Mutual sexual enjoyment is learned as spouses develop experience with their own and their spouse's sexual responses.
- 2) Poor communication.** Many problems can be resolved simply by talking together frankly and honestly, without condemnation or shame.
- 3) Poor technique.** Usually this results from a lack of understanding the wife's sexual response resulting in inadequate stimulation to arousal, which usually requires more time than the husband's sexual response, who must learn to slow his response down.
- 4) Performance anxiety.** Fear of failure and assuming the "spectator role" inhibit sexual arousal.
- 5) Relationship conflict.** Unresolved conflicts, anger and bitterness, guilt, fear, and lack of trust inhibit sexual responses.
- 6) Stress and fatigue.** The body and mind require energy in order to function properly in the sexual domain.
- 7) Depression.** Depressed mood, especially for prolonged periods of time, can result in reduced libido.
- 8) Medication side effects.** Antidepressants, blood pressure medications, and drugs that produce a dry mouth (anticholinergic effects) can impede desire, arousal, or orgasm.
- 9) History of sexual abuse/trauma.** Pain, shame, guilt, disgust, fear, or anger can become associated with sexual behavior as a result of sexual trauma.
- 10) Distractions, lack of privacy, hurry.** Good sexual responses require focus and planning, especially after children are a part of the family.
- 11) Difficulty letting go.** Safety and trust in oneself and one's spouse are important for sexual intimacy. Personality traits such as excessive needs for control may inhibit sexual responses since relaxation and reflex are an important part of the sexual response.

Resource: *Intended for Pleasure* by Ed Wheat.