

Love is Not Self Seeking Giving our Bodies

On **Exciting True Love**, we have studied how God, who created the sexual relationship - the loving, touching and pleasure that a husband and wife are to enjoy together - how God desires that they have freedom to give enjoyment to each other.

He didn't intend for them to be ashamed of the fun that they had when they closed their doors to everyone else and enjoyed each other. God's design for sex is that this pleasure that the husband and wife have in their sexual relationship be so great that the husband would always be rejoicing in his wife, thinking "Yeah, what a wife I have – she is so sweet! Oh, how I enjoy her breasts!"

Not only that, but God wants the husband to be bringing sexual pleasure to his wife – to be touching her and caressing her in ways that bring her happiness. He is to love his wife, to not be harsh with her but to be kind and understanding.

Lesson:

In the Bible, in **1 Corinthians chapter 7**, the author Paul is writing about sex. He says in **verse 3** in the New International Version translation of the Bible: the husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife.

Doesn't that make the sexual relationship between a husband and wife sound like work? I must say that I don't like that translation – "marital duty". To me, it doesn't at all align with what we have studied elsewhere in the Bible that is God's design for sex.

A theologian, Joseph Dillow, says that a good translation for "marital duty" is "debt of pleasure". "Debt" is something that you owe someone. And "pleasure" is that which gives you enjoyment, what makes you happy, what makes you feel good. "Debt of pleasure" is something that I can understand! It's much clearer to me than "marital duty".

When we get married, we owe pleasure to our husband/our wife. We have a debt of pleasure to them that we should be fulfilling throughout our marriage. A husband owes pleasure to his wife. We studied that in **Deuteronomy chapter 24 verse 5** where it said that a husband is to bring happiness to his wife.

He needs to be kind and considerate of her, doing what would bring her happiness. And he needs to bring her happiness sexually as well because he owes her sexual enjoyment. And the wife owes her husband sexual pleasure, too.

Now let's think about this: suppose Lucy owes me money. I can go to her and ask her for that money. "Lucy, Can you pay me that money you owe me?" She can say to me, "Sure, I've got that money right now." or "I'd like, to but I just don't have any money. How about on Saturday?" She can say either of those or, Lucy could just say, "No." or she could say nothing at all. Now, if I am a good person, could I go to Lucy and demand that she pays me? "You pay me now!" After all, she owes it to me.

As a good person, could I go to Lucy's house, beat her up, and take that money? After all, she owes it to me. It's my money. Does a good person do that? Of course not! We would call that stealing, wouldn't we? No, I could discuss with her what I want, why I might need it. I'd listen to her. Together

we could try to find a solution. However, if she refused, I couldn't take that money from her. That would be stealing.

Likewise, a wife owes her husband sexual pleasure. Now, he can say, "How about tonight? A smart husband might even say, "I'll get the kids to bed and you can have some time to yourself. Then let's meet in the shower and I'll get you all ready." The wise wife is likely to respond, "Great idea."

However, she might not. She might be feeling sick and say, "How about tomorrow night? I'm just feeling miserable tonight." Very reasonable. Or she might be very angry and contemptuous and say, "No," or not even respond to him. It's possible.

Can he go to her and demand sex from her? After all, she owes it to him. Can he take it from her? After all, she is being a difficult wife. Can he say, "You give it to me! You owe it to me!"? Think about it.

I suggest that he cannot. Not if he is a good man. A wife owes her husband sexual pleasure and he can suggest a time, place. He might say, "Let's hurry home. We have an hour to ourselves before the children will be there." He can invite his wife to sexual pleasure but he is never to demand or force his wife to have sex with him.

Why do you suppose God would say that? After all, God wants a husband to be the leader in the household. Why shouldn't he be able to demand sex?

[It's because] if a husband wants great sex, he won't have it if he demands it. There may be a temporary sexual release but this isn't the kind of sexual relationship that is going to be getting better and better through the years. Certainly it isn't going to be satisfying to the wife. The kind of sex that is demanded is empty with increasing dissatisfaction.

God created sex with much better plans for the enjoyment of it than that. Sexual pleasure isn't something that one demands from their spouse. It is something one gives. A husband gives sexual pleasure to his wife. He thinks of ways to treat her so she feels loved and important to him.

We spoke in an earlier session that a woman gets sexually excited by how she is treated. To turn on his wife tonight, a husband starts treating her well in the morning. Then when they go to bed together, he wants to think of her needs and forget his own. He wants to touch her, exploring her body in ways that delight her and give her pleasure. He wants to think of bringing her to fulfillment. That is the debt of pleasure he owes her.

She wants to be thinking of giving her body to her husband, letting him delight in it. Let's read **First Corinthians chapter 7 verses 3 and 4** in the Bible. I'll be substituting "debt of pleasure" for the phrase "marital duty".

The husband should fulfill his debt of pleasure to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

Do you have the idea?

Nearly every couple has different needs for how often they desire sex. It is important to discuss how frequently you want sex and make sure that when you are married, your coming together for your times of sexual pleasure are satisfying to both of you. Certainly both the husband and wife don't have to come to fulfillment every time but one should not feel used.

Let's continue reading in **First Corinthians chapter 7 verse 5**. I'm reading in the New Living Translation because I think it is so clear. It is again speaking of a husband and wife.

Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Sexual intimacy means any of the closeness that a husband and wife enjoy that would excite them sexually. So a person shouldn't stop giving sexual enjoyment to their spouse unless they have both agreed upon it.

For example, say a wife comes home from church, oh, and there was some great worship. She is thinking how she would just like to continue, giving herself more completely to prayer with the Lord for the next couple days. She comes in and her husband puts his arms around her. Is this time for her to say, "I'm sorry but, I'm going to be giving myself more completely to prayer for the next couple days – so don't even think about it." NO!

Did they agree already about not having sexual intimacy? NO!

She should lean into him, continuing right with that worship that she was enjoying at church, and enjoy sexual fun with her husband, worshipping the brilliance of God to create such a gift. Then afterwards, after they have had their fill, she can say, "I was thinking about setting the next couple days aside for prayer about that problem I was having. Would you mind not having sex for the next two days?" Then, if he agrees, they stop sexual intimacy for a couple of days.

It's interesting that the time in which a couple would stop having sex is for a short time and for prayer. The Bible doesn't say "stop for some special holy day", or some other reason. It's for prayer only. Interesting! Sex between a husband and wife isn't sinful. It's good. It's not something that will tarnish a holy day!

Then the Bible continues with this:

Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

[last part of **First Corinthians chapter 7 verse 5**]

Who will Satan tempt a married man with? His wife? Will he send these thoughts his way – "Oh, your wife, don't you just love her body, and just think about the way she responds to your touch?" NO! He doesn't want a husband thinking those thoughts. Those are pure, holy thoughts. Those thoughts will keep a husband from looking at other women.

Satan's going to tempt a husband with that nice lady at church or the woman at the bank, or the one at the bus stop. That is who Satan will tempt a married man with.

How about a married woman? Satan is never going to get her thinking about how her husband treats her so well, how he excites her body with his touch. No, that will make her stronger against the temptation of thinking about other men.

A good, exciting sexual relationship in our marriage, one that is satisfying to both the husband and wife, keeps us from being so tempted by others!

We are going to be tempted, don't get me wrong. Sexual temptation doesn't end when you get married. But when you are married, you make sure you take time to give and receive plenty of sexual enjoyment with your spouse.

Afterword:

The gift of touching, caressing, and giving enjoyment to one's husband or wife, is what the sexual relationship in marriage should be. It is doing what gives pleasure to the other, not thinking of oneself.

Listen to the following situations and think how these married people would benefit by our study today.

- Elizabeth worked late each day and then was so busy helping people that she didn't see her husband very much at all.
- Innocence said she'd be glad to find excuses so that she didn't have to have sex as often.
- Grace is married but has "retired" from sex.
- Dennis and his wife are trying to decide if he should take that well-paid job 12 hours away from where his wife lives and works. They are trying to decide if they should live apart.
- Andrew is impotent and is no longer touching his wife.
- Joel goes out with the guys every night after work and comes in very late, often after his wife is asleep.
- Amina has been angry at her husband for so many years that she can't even remember why.
- And Joseph has been aggressive to his wife and she now cowers whenever he comes around because she is afraid.

Listen again to **First Corinthians chapter 7 verses 3 and 5**

The husband should fulfill his "debt of pleasure" to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

After studying this verse,

- Elizabeth realized that God wants her husband to be the most important person in her life and decreased her time spent away from him.
- Andrew has realized that even though he can't have sexual intercourse he can still touch his wife and give her sexual enjoyment.
- Grace and her husband talked with their pastor about ideas on how to come out of retirement from sex.
- Amina, who had been angry for so long, touched her husband gently today and made his favorite meal.
- Joseph decided to no longer be aggressive to his wife and instead brought her a gift and is speaking to her gently. He has decided not to touch her until she knows that it will only be in kindness.

What is God speaking to you about?

Please join us next week on ***Exciting True Love***.