



(Member Guide)

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Read this aloud:

Sunday's message was based on the text in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5. We learned that in a vibrant biblical marriage relationship there is:

1. **Common ground:** Equality. Neither partner's needs are more important (vs.3)
2. **Common responsibility:** Sacrifice, giving, learning (vs. 4)
3. **Common ecstasy:** Enjoying the second-greatest gift together (vs.5)

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

Have someone in your group read 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Paul calls sex a "marital responsibility" or "duty" to be "fulfilled" (7:3).

- a. Why does Paul use this type of language?
- b. How does Paul's teaching apply to married couples with different sex drives?
- c. What advice would Paul give to married couples whose sex life has faded because of the pressures and busyness of life?
- d. How can such couples revive their relationships?

In our culture, we are bombarded at grocery store checkout lanes with tabloids selling advice and gimmicks on how to have better, "hotter" sex.

- a. How can we as Christians realistically enjoy God's gift of sexual intimacy without getting caught up in the expectations and fanfare of the world we live in?
- b. Does good sex in marriage require input from secular sources?
- c. Describe the disparity between the world's view of sex and a biblical point of view.

In 1 Corinthians 7:4, Paul is putting sexuality on a higher plane than one may find in most cultures, where sex is often seen as the husband's privilege and the wife's obligation. Paul is saying something radical; there is mutual authority, privilege and common responsibility in the sexual aspect of the marriage relationship.

Read Philippians 2:3-4

- a. Discuss ways that couples can practically apply the biblical principle that "my body belongs to my spouse"?
- b. In what ways can sex be used for something *other* than your own satisfaction?
- c. Are there any valid reasons for one spouse to withhold sex from the other?

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- d. How should you respond if your spouse has a desire for sex and you do not?
 - e. How will personal sacrifice and mutual cooperation help protect married couples from temptation?

1 Corinthians 7:5 says “Do not deprive one another sexually except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again: otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

- a. What would be a practical situation for a couple to refrain from sex and pray?
- b. Why is it important for the couple to come together (have sex) again?
- c. What are some examples of temptation and lack of self-control mentioned in verse 5?
- d. Why does Satan seek to obliterate Christian marriages?
- e. How can I so fulfill my spouse that Satan is left frustrated and flees?

DIGGING DEEPER

Are there things in our lives (work, hobbies, technology, etc.) that are keeping us from focusing on the most important relationship we have outside of Christ: our spouse? If we don't spend time with someone, we can't truly know them. Knowing our spouse leads to enjoying him/her more; this naturally overflows into the bedroom.

Activity: Here's a common scenario: A couple lies in bed with their backs turned to each other and plenty of space between. There's a simple way to cultivate intimacy before drifting off to sleep: Roll over and cuddle your partner every night. Put your head on his or her chest or shoulder. Pray, talk or Play “footsies.” If these intimate moments lead to making love, wonderful. But regardless, you've shared some intimate moments and are taking one additional step to protect the marriage bed.

Action: Bodily activity produces endorphins — the “happy chemical.” We know that physical activity increases physical health and, according to James White, Ph.D., “Research suggests that people who get regular aerobic exercise have more sex, better orgasms ... than non-aerobic exercisers.”

Another benefit of engaging in physical activity together is that it increases relational health by strengthening the bond of friendship between married lovers.

Instead of letting your dates get stuck in the rut of going out to eat and to the movies, plan dates that involve physical activity. If you have trouble thinking of recreational activities for the two of you to enjoy, Bill and Pam Farrel provide a list in their article, “Recreational Intimacy” on the Focus on the Family website.

http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/daily_living/making-time-for-romance-and-intimacy/recreational-intimacy.aspx

CLOSING THOUGHT

Sex in marriage is given to us for the mutual pleasure of those involved. It is the highest form of physical ecstasy, without a doubt. It rates as the number one recreation of the world, and there is no question about that. It always has been, and it always will be. Nothing compares to it, and God likes it that way; he designed it that way. He gave us our erogenous zones and permitted them, intended them, to be aroused and excited. He intended for human beings to experience this exquisite ecstasy of orgasm, but he designed that it be protected, that it be experienced within walls of security which only marriage, as the Bible envisions it, can provide.

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