

Speaking Frankly About Sex

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Date: 11 October 1981

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[0:00] Becky, I don't want to have to tell you again. Turn your light out and go to sleep. It's almost 11 o'clock.! Honey, you haven't said much all evening. Is anything wrong?

No. Nothing worth talking about. Are you still worried about that thing with your parents? Look, I'm sorry I was tied up at the office, but the project will be over soon and then everything will be back to normal.

I'll believe that when I see it. Look, everything will be better tomorrow morning. Why don't you finish up here and then come on to bed, okay? Jerry, you really amaze me. Do you honestly think we can solve this problem in bed?

As you can see, sexuality in marriage is an extremely sensitive area. And yet no thorough discussion of marriage can ignore the role of sex. It's not the biggest problem area in marriage, but sometimes it may seem that way.

Dr. Carl Brickene believes that sex is God's idea. So beginning with the Bible, he will candidly discuss the spiritual dimension of sex and some areas where adults are misinformed and differences in male-female sexual stimulation and response.

[1:22] Due to the sensitive nature of the next two sessions, they're recommended for mature teenagers and adults. Let's join Dr. Carl Brickene for speaking frankly about sex.

Dr. Carl Brickene for speaking frankly about sex. This is by far the most difficult session of our seminar. The reason for that is because we're talking about human sexuality.

And most of us are very uncomfortable talking about human sexuality in anything except the most private possible kind of setting.

But because that's true, two or three things have happened that we believe have had a negative impact on family life. And so these things have caused us to include this body of material in this seminar that you are being part of.

One of the things that has happened is that we have a number of young people growing up and never hearing anyone from the church, sometimes from their own families, anyone that they respect as being a real Christian, talk about human sexuality.

[2:32] And what happens as a result of that is our young people sometimes grow up thinking good people don't have sexual needs. Good people don't have any sexual drives. And so when they reach that time of their life, when they begin to sense sexual needs and sexual drives, it's very automatic for them to think I must be a bad person.

Because the only ones talking about sex are the bad people of the world. The good people are quiet on this subject. So I must be a bad person. And that's tragic.

Another thing that has happened is that there are a lot of couples, both old and young, who are having very serious sexual problems in their marriages and think that there is no help.

They are ashamed or a little bit hesitant at least to go to a counselor and say, we've been married three months or we've been married 15 years and we still don't have the problems worked out in the physical area of our lives.

And so the information is fairly solid that a lot of couples spend the duration of their married lives unfulfilled, at least one or the other of the partners unfulfilled, in this particular dimension of life.

[3:46] And so when we began to talk about the marriage enrichment seminar, one of the things that we said was we want to spend some time talking, talking sensitively, nevertheless talking about the sexual relationship in the marriage.

And so that's what we're going to do. Let me share with you a letter that says it, I think, as well as anything that I've ever read. It came after one of our seminars in another state.

And it's written by a young man who had been married at the time that he wrote the letter. He'd been married 14 years. He was a high school teacher, had a college degree and one graduate degree.

His wife was also a college graduate. And yet his letter says, yet during all that time in education, neither of us once heard any Christian say any more about sex than that it was sinful, dirty, bad, etc.

He says, we have two children, once 13 and then the other 10, but they were planned according as we understood it, that God's plan for the woman was to bear children. But we would never have thought of having sex just for pleasure because we had both been taught that it was so wrong.

[4:55] In fact, I don't think my wife's parents ever mentioned sex in any way whatsoever, good or bad. He says, we've had sexual relations a few times since the seminar and I feel like someone who's just shoplifted something and gotten away with it.

Now, that's sad, isn't it, for a married man to say, I feel like I have committed some kind of sin when I've had the sexual relationship with my wife.

He concludes the letter by saying, we had what I think was a good marriage without sex and I never felt that I was missing anything. Granted, I had heard non-Christians talking about having sex, but I just considered the source.

I had never heard members of the church discussing sex before, except for my dad telling me never to touch a girl. And there's a recent Harvard-based study on human sexuality that says that parents aren't really doing the job very well either.

This study discovered that most modern parents are doing about what their own parents did with regard to sex education and that's almost nothing.

[6:02] And so, we want to talk a little bit about this very important, very fundamental part of the marriage relationship.

I want to share with you some comments on six passages of Scripture that I believe have something very special to say about the sexual relationship between husband and wife.

The first of them is Genesis chapter 1, verses 27 and 28, where God says, where Moses writes, so God created man in his own image.

In the image of God, he created him male and female. He created them. And God blessed them and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.

And the comment that I like to make on that passage is to say that sex is God's idea. I believe we act sometimes as though sex is the product of some modern, wicked, evil, vulgar, pornographic mind.

[7:06] And I think the Christian of all the people in the world ought to be one to say, it is not. Sex is God's idea. Verse 18, the Lord God said, it's not good that the man should be alone.

I will make him a helper fit for him. And when God made that helper fit for man, she was a sexual being.

God had already designed the man for a sexual partner. And when God created this helper fit for the man, he created her, a sexual being designed physically to fit his body in a sexual relationship that would be God ordained.

And then in Genesis chapter 2, verse 24, you are reminded that God said, therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and he cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh.

It is God's design for their relationship that the two of them in the marriage relationship become one flesh. And that one flesh relationship is basically the sexual relationship between a husband and wife.

[8:16] And then when you come to the New Testament material, there is a passage in Hebrews chapter 13, verse 4, that is extremely important to our study. In Hebrews 13, 4, the Hebrew writer says, let marriage be held in honor among all.

And let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the among all and the adulterous. It's interesting to note that the word translated marriage bed is from the Greek word koitus, which all of us recognize.

And so that passage could be translated, let marriage be held in honor among all and let sexual intercourse in the marriage relationship be undefiled.

Now, for God will judge the among all and the adulterous. The Hebrew writer makes no mistake that God is going to hold responsible and guilty those who involve themselves in sexual relationships

outside of the marriage.

But within the marriage, it is a sacred, holy relationship in the eyes of the Almighty God. Your marriage bed is a sacred, holy place in the eyes of Almighty God.

[9:30] And that's something that a married couple should be able to celebrate. And then there's a passage in 1 Thessalonians 4 that my friend Paul Faulkner has talked about earlier in the seminar, but it's an important passage in this study and we want to focus in this particular regard.

1 Thessalonians 4, verses 4 and 5 read that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God.

Paul says a man needs to know how to take a wife for himself. As a matter of fact, I'm convinced that most men need some training in how to take a wife. And Paul lays it down in no uncertain terms that the beginning of that training is to say to a young man, don't marry just to have a bed partner. And when you look for a companion for the rest of your life, don't look at her as though you are looking even primarily for a bed partner. What you're looking for is a life partner.

You're looking for someone to share not just the moments in bed, but you're looking for someone to share your boredom, your work, your leisure, your life.

[10:46] Someone to share your joys and someone to share your sorrows and someone to share your relationship with your children. There are all kinds of things that are involved in this relationship.

But the Apostle Paul is saying that we need to learn to take a wife in holiness and in honor. She's a person. And one of the things that I like to say to young women is I think you need to be careful when you think of yourself as sexy.

I think a young woman who thinks of herself as being sexy and tries to attract attention because she's sexy, when she gets what she's after, she won't like it.

Because it's really insulting to see her only as a sex object. I think the same thing applies to a man who tries to attract attention because he's macho.

He thinks on the outside that's probably a pretty good idea. I like to be thought of as a macho man. But when someone sees him that way, there is a tendency to think of him as an object instead of as a person.

[11:50] And I think that the Apostle Paul is tapping at the base of this problem in our culture, maybe in all of humanity. So many years ago when he said a man needs to know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and in honor, not in passion of lust.

Now, the other passage that I want to deal with as we begin to talk about human sexuality is the passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 7. The Corinthians have obviously written the Apostle Paul some letters, maybe more than one, asking some questions.

And so Paul begins the chapter by saying that concerning the things about which he wrote. And he begins to talk about these things that they have obviously written about. And in verse 2, just the second verse, he begins by saying that because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Now, notice before we go further into this passage that it is legitimate for a husband and wife to expect children in their relationship. And that's a legitimate function of the sexual relationship between a husband and wife.

But that is not the only legitimate function of the sexual relationship. We know that that's true. Because in this passage, Paul is talking at length about human sexuality and he never once mentions babies.

[13:12] That's not what he's talking about. Here he's talking about the satisfaction of the sexual desires of husband and wife. And so begin again with me in verse 2 as Paul says, But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does.

And verse 5 says, Do not refuse one another. That's a biblical command. The King James translates it, Defraud ye not one the other. Cause the withholding of sexual privileges in the marriage relationship fraud.

This translation says, Do not refuse one another. Except perhaps by agreement for a season that you may devote yourselves to prayer, but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control.

Now, let me discuss very quickly some positive purposes of sex in a healthy marriage and then some problem areas in the sexual relationship in marriage.

[14 : 23] And then we'll talk about some differences between male and female with regard to human sexuality. The first positive purpose of sex in a healthy marriage is reproduction.

God intended for every baby to have both a mama and a daddy who loved each other and loved that baby. And it's very obvious in the design of a family by God that that's true.

Most of you are aware that a baby cannot live the first year of his life without love. You can keep him clean and you can feed him a perfectly balanced healthy diet, but without human contact, without human love, a child will die the first year of his life.

I believe that God designed him that way. And God gives us nine months of notice for the baby to come so that we can make preparation for receiving that baby into the family. And my visualization of that is that when a baby is about to be born, you visualize mom and dad in each other's arms in love, sharing life.

And as a baby is born, they just back up and put their arms around the baby. And a second one is born and they back up and put their arms around a second one. And ten are born and you just have a family standing with their arms around each other.

[15 : 31] Because a family, biblically, is a place where you're loved, where you're accepted, where you belong, where somebody cares about who you are and what you're doing and what you're all about and how you feel about things.

And so the first positive purpose of sex in a healthy marriage is reproduction. A second is pleasure. God intended for the sexual relationship between a husband and wife to be a pleasurable relationship.

And the sexual climax is the greatest physical pleasure in the world. In 1970, Masters and Johnson wrote the first book that they were to write for a non-professional audience.

And the title of it was The Pleasure Bond. And the thesis of it was that the pleasure of the sexual relationship holds two people together in a long-term relationship. The second positive purpose of sex in a healthy marriage is pleasure.

A third is unity. There is nothing in the world that draws two people together and gives them a sense of uniqueness. Like this relationship that is shared only between the two of them.

[16 : 39] You see, God's design of this is that this relationship should never be shared with anyone else before marriage. And after the wedding takes place, never shared with anyone outside the marriage.

And so this relationship brings to the couple tremendous power to bring them into a unit and make them one.

Unity is a third positive purpose of sex in a healthy marriage. And a fourth is to reaffirm our identity. From the time we were born, we were either male or female. When you were born, a nurse came in or someone came in and said to your dad, Congratulations, you're the father of a bouncing baby boy.

A bouncing baby girl. From the time we were born, we were either male or female. And in the sexual relationship in marriage, that identity is reaffirmed. Now let's turn and look for a moment at some sources of problems.

And we'll deal quickly with the first three. Ignorance is a tremendous problem in the sexual relationship. Guilt is a second. And fear is a third. A fourth source of problems in the marriage relationship and the sexual part of the marriage relationship is problems related to external factors such as long working hours and heavy stress and lack of privacy.

[17 : 58] I remember several years ago, I had a young man walk into my office. He was 22 years of age, senior in the university. It was long in the spring. And he said, Dr. Brickeen, I've lost my sex drive. He said, my wife and I have been married since August.

This is our last year in college. And he said, the first few months of our life together was very delightful. We both enjoyed immensely that part of our lives. But he said, now, since about the first of the year, I have been completely unable to function sexually.

And he said, it's very frustrating to us and it's frightening to me. Frightening to my wife too, but frightening to me in a very unique way. We began to talk about his physical health and what he'd been doing. We began to talk about the physical aspects of it.

And I discovered that here was a young man, 22 years of age, finishing college. He was taking 18 hours of college work, making straight A's his senior year, working 40 hours a week to support himself and his wife.

And he had worked himself to a complete physical frazzle and it had rendered him temporarily impotent. But he needed desperately to talk to someone about that.

[19:04] I think that most of us probably are unaware of what heavy pressure does to our relationship. A fifth source of problems in the sexual relationship is personal hostility, anger, resentment, bitterness, this kind of thing.

Those negative emotions that filter into a relationship and cause husband or wife to resent each other. There would have been a time when I would have said, I believe that resentment can destroy a wife's enjoyment, but I don't believe it would be possible for the male.

I've long since learned that that was a false premise. I know today men who have been married one couple nine years, another 11, another 23, another 35 years, they sleep in the same bed together, but have not had sexual relations as husband and wife in several years.

Because when the woman approaches her husband, he refuses the sexual relationship. And so difficulties in the marriage relationship, problems that are not resolved, resentments, bitterness, hostility.

And what that says to all of us is that we need to keep the problems worked out of our marriage.

Now, I want us to turn to some differences between the sexes. And though the differences between male and female are myriad, there are eight differences that I want us to focus on just briefly in this part of our seminar.

[20:33] One is that it's fairly obvious that the male has greater interest in the sexual relationship than the female does. That's not true in every situation, but it is true in the majority of situations right now.

A second factor that is involved involves the accumulation of seminal fluid in the male that many experts believe today constitutes an internal stimulus for sexual interest.

There is nothing equivalent to that seminal buildup in the female. And so the seminal buildup in the male seems to be the basis, and we don't know exactly how it works.

It's amazing to me how little we know about sexual responsiveness and what really takes place and why these things take place. But there are many experts who believe that that seminal buildup is the physiological basis for the interest, the very high interest on the part of the male.

If that's true, then the wife whose husband seems to her to be overly interested in the sexual relationship needs to be very, very responsive to her husband, realizing that it's not just that he is overly interested in sex, but because the Lord has created him this way, and because that seminal buildup in his body constitutes an internal stimulus so far as sexual activity and interest is concerned.

[22:06] A third difference between male and female has to do with the fact that pleasurable sexual experience extends through a greater part of life for both. There is a myth out that says that after a male passes 65 or 75 years of age, that his interest in the sexual relationship drops, and that eventually he will be unable to continue this sexual activity.

Let me give you two or three things that I think are important for us to realize as we get older. One is that it's true that 25% of the males at 65 years of age in our culture are unable to perform sexually.

That's 65 a form. Ten years later, by 75 years of age, that rises to 50%. Half the men at 75 years of age are unable to perform anymore sexually.

But latest research indicates that over 90% of that is psychologically induced pressure. And so the studies that are coming out are saying if men as they get older will not put psychological pressure on themselves to perform quickly, or to perform as frequently perhaps as they did in their earlier years, that there is no reason why their sexual interest and pleasure and activity should not continue as long as they're healthy even though they may reach past 80 and even 90 years of age.

A fourth difference between male and female is the time at which each reaches a peak of frequency and physical responsiveness. And for the male, it's late in his teens, probably at 17 years of age.

[23 : 49] The sex drive in the male will be as great as it will ever be in his life. The studies are saying it reaches its peak at about 17 years of age, never until about 26 years of age, at which time it begins to diminish just slightly slightly for until he's about 35 and then the rate at which it diminishes steepens just a little bit.

The female in our culture reaches the height of her sexual interest and drive between 28 and 35 years of age. But the studies that are available at the present time say that that is a cultural phenomenon.

And where interest and experience is the same that the female sex drive reaches its peak at about the same time that the male sex drive reaches its peak.

And then a fifth difference is with regard to orgasm capacity. And let me sketch this one on the blackboard for you. What that one says is that the wife has greater orgasm capacity or capacity for climax than the husband does.

If you sketch it like this, consider that line as zero sex drive. The wife's sex drive would ride somewhere above the line. The husband's sex drive would ride somewhere there.

[25 : 10] And as the sexual relationship begins between these two partners, we'll call this first period foreplay. And as foreplay begins, the husband is very quickly ready for sexual intercourse.

The wife, on the other hand, as foreplay begins, begins a gradual rise that will take her somewhere in that kind of a direction.

Which means that the husband is almost immediately ready, but must wait then for his wife. And this second period for him is called the plateau. And so he must wait for sexual intercourse to begin until his wife is more nearly ready.

If he begins at the time that he's ready, he needs to realize that her readiness is very, very low at that point. But if he gives her time, the experts are saying that he should bring her all the way, intercourse will begin somewhere along about there, all the way to her climax.

The reason for that is that once the husband reaches his climax, that his interest in the sexual relationship drops immediately, and drops like a stone, and he will not be ready for another sexual encounter probably for several hours.

[26 : 36] But unlike the wife, the wife, on the other hand, once she has reached her climax, may reach a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth, and on.

There is no end that has been found to that statistic as yet. But what the experts are saying is that it's unrealistic for husband and wife to expect to reach simultaneous climax.

But that's unrealistic. Some couples will achieve that, but not regularly for most couples. And that the more realistic expectation would be for the wife to achieve her climax first, because she may reach a second and a third by the time her husband reaches his climax.

And so the more pleasurable relationship would be represented here. But that difference is that the wife has greater orgasm capacity than does her husband.

A sixth difference is the interest in touching sensations. Now, both husband and wife are interested in touching.

[27 : 39] But in a different way. The husband is aroused sexually by sexual touching more readily than is the wife. The wife takes longer to respond to sexual touching.

I remember several years ago in Oklahoma City, at the break after this particular material was covered, there was a young wife that came up to me at the break in tears. And she was being trailed by, I assumed her husband, and he turned out to be, her husband of about two years, was walking about four or five feet behind her.

And as she came to me with tears in her eyes, she said, Dr. Bukin, would you tell my husband what you just said? And I said, we have spent an hour and a half talking about these things at that particular time.

I said, which one? And she said, that about touching. And I said, what do you want me to tell you? Tell me the background. And she said, well, my husband thinks that I should be as quickly aroused sexually by his touching as he is by my sexual touching.

And she said, when I am not as quickly aroused as he is, he grows angry. He says, you don't love me. If you loved me, you would be as quickly aroused as I am. And she says, I do love him.

[28 : 50] But then when he becomes angry, he becomes rough, and it destroys this relationship for us. And so perhaps here's one that some young couples need to realize.

All of us are interested in being touched. But the male is more quickly aroused by sexual touching than the female is. And the male is naturally visually oriented.

There is some debate about that and some differences of opinion. And I've had a number of people send me articles that would argue that the female is as visually oriented as the male is.

But none of them proves that as yet. What they do prove is that the female can be conditioned to be visually oriented. To a very high degree. But it seems that the male is visually oriented.

Ladies, it's probably very important for you to realize that your husband is visually oriented with regard to sex. You may notice him watching a pretty girl as she walks by.

[29:49] That's a very normal phenomenon for him. Guys, we need to be careful of that because it's possible for us to hurt our wife's feelings about that. I remember a couple of years ago I picked up a paper somewhere and I clipped out an editorial that said, and the headline said, Women Not Turned On By Male Centerfolds.

And he recounted the background of the beginning of the girly magazines for men and then coming along of the male moods shown in magazines for women.

Most of those died almost immediately after they began. And the report went on to say that the women at first bought the magazines and glanced and then they looked away.

And eventually they turned back and looked again and then they yawned. And they said, put those guys back in long trousers, please.

There are some magazines that continue to sell that the basic purpose is to show male moods. But the general consensus of opinion is that the ones who buy most of them are male homosexuals.

[31:02] An eighth difference between male and female sexuality has to do with menstruation. It's obvious of course that males have nothing comparable to this within the female.

That in the female menstruation is never pleasurable. It's always inconvenient and it's sometimes painful. I remember the first time I said that in a seminar and the break that came up immediately after there was a man who came up and he said, never pleasurable.

And I said, I wonder where in the world this yo-yo is coming from. And I looked at him and I said, never pleasurable. He said, I don't agree with that at all. He said, I came home from the office the other day and my wife had the biggest smile on her face that you've ever seen.

And I said, touche. I said, relieved, maybe. Never pleasurable. Guys, clods.

We need to realize that our wives' menstrual period is not some time that is pleasurable in her life.

[32:10] This relationship between husband and wife is intended to be such a precious relationship. I remember some time ago we were in Wichita, Kansas and a couple came up after the seminar was over.

And the wife, trailed by the husband who was just behind her, said, Dr. McKeen, I really am delighted that you have been talking about this material because she said it took us ten long years to learn what you have just covered in a few minutes.

And she said, I wish that we had had some opportunity to know about these things many years before we did. But she said, for the first ten years of our marriage, we both thought that I was put together wrong.

Because, she said, I was not very interested in the sexual relationship. Would you believe that I have found wives all over the country in these seminars, wives that are not really all that interested in the sexual relationship?

I remember the first time was in Idaho. And a young wife came up to me at the break and she said, Dr. McKeen, we've been married a lot of years.

[33:24] And she said, through all of the years, I've had no interest at all in the sexual relationship. As far as I can tell, I have no interest, no drive for the sexual relationship. But she said, my husband and I are both Christians.

And she said, I love him very dearly. And she said, I don't really want him to know that I don't have any interest in this relationship. But she said, I can't keep it from him. I can't fake it.

He does know that I'm not interested in the sexual relationship. But she said, what in the world can I do to share this part of his life that's so important to him?

What in the world can I do? And I shared a number of the books with her that have to do with this part of the life of a husband and wife. And one of the things that I said to her was that in all probability, the two of you have never read many books, have you?

And she said, no, we really haven't.