

# Unit 2: Premarital Counseling

## *#6: Pure Intimacy*

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# Outline

- Basic Purposes of Marriage
- Basic Differences between the Sexes
- A Biblical View of Sexuality
- Preparing for Sexual Intimacy
- Intimacy and Sexuality in Premarital Counseling
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# Basic Purposes of Marriage

- Clear, definite objectives will give meaning to all activities.
- *For Example:* An architect plans & designs a building depending on the purpose/usage.
- Knowing the purpose for any activity is the 1<sup>st</sup> step towards making that activity successful.
- The Christian home is happier when the husband & wife understand their roles in God's plan for the family.

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

- God has ordained marriage & the family for two distinct purposes:
  1. Mutual Companionship
  2. Procreation

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #1: COMPANIONSHIP:

- Genesis 2:18: It was *not good* that man was alone – he needed companionship.
- Genesis 2:21: Woman was created *out of* man
- Genesis 2:23: The *intimacy* of woman to man was revealed to Adam at the very beginning, so he declared the woman as *his bone & flesh*
- Relationship is *the* key issue: Marriage is a partnership between two equal partners.

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #1: COMPANIONSHIP:

- The Hebrew phrase *“an help meet for him”* may be translated *“helper as his counterpart”*.
- The woman is *truly* man's counterpart, his complement & the one that completes his life.
- The metaphor of the wife compared to the Church & the husband to Christ in Eph. 5:23-32 speak of responsibility and leadership in the family.

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #1: COMPANIONSHIP:

- Just like Christ came as a servant & gave His life for the Church, so the husband's attitude is to conform to such an ideal of sacrificial service.
- The wife, dependent & receptive, exemplifies in her vocation the calling of the Church to be servants of Christ.
- All authority however derives from God & must be answerable to Him.

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #1: COMPANIONSHIP:

- Let the husband recognize that authority brings responsibility as well & he should make his marriage a partnership.
- The husband is the spiritual leader of his home & the example for the family to follow.
- The husband should love his wife *sacrificially* & express that love in word and deed.
- The wife should in turn exhibit natural, willing submissiveness to her husband.



# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #1: COMPANIONSHIP:

- The home and its upkeep is the wife's responsibility to make it a place of warmth, friendliness, cleanliness & welcome (see Titus 2:4, 5; Prov. 31:10-31).
- The wife should love her husband, and so live that her husband will safely trust in her.
- *As both the husband and wife love, respect & submit to one another (Eph. 5:21), they meet the Biblical standards of companionship.*

# #1-Companionship:

How to cherish and nourish your wife  
(Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29)

## Practical ways to cherish your wife

- Be trustworthy
- Make her load lighter, not heavier
- Listen to her
- Pray with her
- Put her needs before your own
- Show her your gratitude

## Practical ways to nourish your wife

- Help her develop and utilize her gifts
- Help her fulfill her purpose and dreams
- Showing and telling her you love her
- Make romance a priority

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #2: PROCREATION:

- Procreation is part of God's initial blessing in Gen. 1:28 when He commanded *"Be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth"*.
- Procreation is a purpose of marriage.
- God has given to parents the power to join Him in procreation of children.
- This power must be exercised in loving concern to all who are involved.

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #2: PROCREATION:

- In thankfulness to God, a couple may plan their intimate relationship so that any child born to them will be wanted.
- However, all parents should recognize that they are not in final control, and should gratefully accept whichever child they get.
- *"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward." (Psalms 127:3)*

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #2: PROCREATION:

- Christians should have the proper concept of the place of physical union in marriage.
- Proper attitudes and understanding are imperative to happy marriages.
- Physical union was designed by God and for a good purpose.
- The total marriage relationship is pure & holy: not shameful or sinful when functioning in the role God had ordained for it.

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #2: PROCREATION:

- *"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."* (Heb 13:4)
- God's Judgment → Transgression of marriage
- Marriage is not just for procreation but to maintain & fulfil love; to be mutually enjoyed.
- 1 Cor. 7:3-5: Partners are not to refuse or deprive their mates of marital privileges. God's word is very clear in this matter.

# Basic Purposes of Marriage

## #2: PROCREATION:

- If husband & wife are experiencing difficulties in sex fulfilment, they should discuss this frankly.
- Guard against those things that hinder such as fatigue, hurry, and overwork which lead to irritability & leave *little* leisure time.
- Privacy is the first law of marriage, so babies should be weaned away after some time.
- The intimate experiences provided by God for a married couple are needed for marital bliss.

# Basic Differences between the Sexes



- There are **three basic physical differences** between males and females:
  1. Female Hormonal Cycles
  2. Stimulus for Sexual Arousal
  3. The Desire for Friendship



# Basic Differences between the Sexes

## #1: Female Hormonal Cycles:

- One important physical difference is that female hormone levels are affected in a cyclical manner. Her hormone levels can be very different from week to week and even from day to day.
- This hormonal variation can affect her moods, her sexual interests, and even her appearance due to fluid retention at certain times in her hormonal cycle.

# Basic Differences between the Sexes

## #2: Stimulus for Sexual Arousal:

- Another major difference between the sexes.
- Males tend to be interested in sexual activity based on visual stimulation.
- Men are sexually aroused very quickly by visual stimuli.
- Women's arousal mechanism responds more slowly & to emotional stimuli.
- Old saying: *"Men give love to get sex, and women give sex to get love"*.

# Basic Differences between the Sexes

## #3: The Desire for Friendship:

- The wife wants her husband to be a friend and confidante *before* she wants him as lover.
- She wants to talk and know that her husband is paying attention to her.
- Men need to be respected, while women need to be cherished.
- If the husband is generous with cherishing his wife, she will respect him without any problem.

# A Biblical View of Sexuality

- During much of Christian history, sex has been condoned as a necessary evil for producing children.
- The Hebrew people understood and interpreted human sexuality as a positive gift from God.
- A wedding was a time of great celebration, partly because it marked the beginning of the sexual life of the couple.
- A newly betrothed man was even excused from participating in war in order to be able to enjoy his bride (Deut. 20:7)

## A Biblical View of Sexuality

- This indicates that the Israelites had a healthy attitude toward sex.
- The bridal pair retired to a nuptial tent/chamber at the end of the wedding festivities to make love together while lying on a clean, white sheet.
- Blood on the sheet indicated that the bride had been a virgin and provided evidence of the consummation of marriage (Deut. 22:13-19).
- In NT times, we find two extreme attitudes toward sex: *licentiousness* and *celibacy*.

# A Biblical View of Sexuality

- Paul rebuked those engaged in incestuous & adulterous sexual relations (1 Cor 5:1, 6:16-18).
- Paul also responded to *“ascetic”* believers by affirming that it was proper for married persons to engage in sexual activities (1 Cor 7:3, 5).
- Genesis is the logical starting point for our quest into the Biblical view of sexuality.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> statement relating to human sexuality is found in Genesis 1:27: *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

# A Biblical View of Sexuality

- The initial divine appraisal of human sexuality as *"very good"* (Gen 1:31) show that Scripture sees the male/female sexual distinction as part of the goodness & perfection of God's original creation.
- Human sexual duality as male and female is related explicitly to God's own image.
- The oneness of intimate fellowship between a man and a woman is expressed in Genesis 2:24 by the phrase *"one flesh"*.
- Paul applies *"one flesh"* to the sexual intercourse between a man and a harlot (1 Cor. 6:16).

# A Biblical View of Sexuality

- God sees sex as a means through which a husband and a wife can achieve a new unity.
- Man's relationship to his wife transcends the one to his parents because it consists of a new oneness consummated by the sexual union.
- Sexual relations within marriage enable a couple to come *"to know"* each other in a way which cannot be experienced in any other way.
- To participate in sexual intercourse means not only to uncover one's body but also one's inner being to another.



# A Biblical View of Sexuality

- This is why Scripture often describes sexual intercourse as *"knowing,"* the same verb used in Hebrews to refer to knowing God. Genesis 4:1 says: *"And Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived."*
- The process which leads to sexual intercourse is one of growing knowledge.
- From the initial casual acquaintance to courtship, marriage, and sexual intercourse, the couple grows in the knowledge of each other and this makes greater intimacy possible.

## A Biblical View of Sexuality

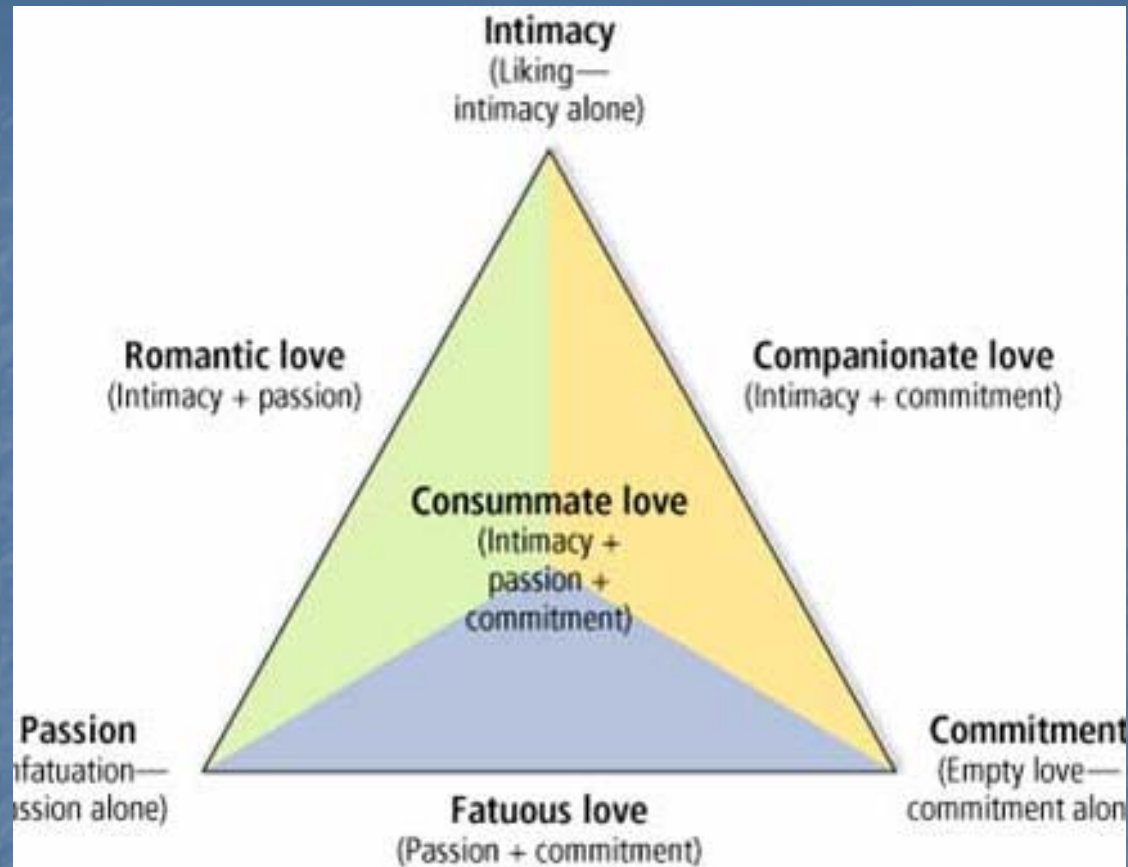
- Sexual intercourse represents the culmination of this growth in *reciprocal knowledge & intimacy*.
- From a Biblical perspective, sexual activity is both *recreative* and *reproductive*.
- God's command, "*Be fruitful and multiply*" (Gen 1:28), is a command to be sexual.
- Sex is a divine gift that can be legitimately enjoyed within marriage.
- Like all other divine gifts, sex is to be partaken with *thankfulness* and *moderation*.

# A Biblical View of Sexuality

- The author of Hebrews admonishes that *“Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure”* (Heb 13:4 NIV). Here, marital sex is extolled as honorable, something not to be embarrassed about.
- Children are a fundamental part of our marriage and sexual relationships.
- The Biblical condemnation of sexual relations *before or outside* marriage is clear (see 1 Cor 6:18).

# A Biblical View of Sexuality

- To conclude, sex is seen in the Bible as part of God's good creation.
- The function of sex is both unitive and procreative.
- It serves to engender a mysterious oneness of body, mind, and spirit between husband and wife while offering them the possibility of bringing children into this world.



# Triangular theory of love

Developed by psychologist Robert Sternberg

# Preparing for Sexual Intimacy

- The **three components of love** are:
  1. **Intimacy**: This encompasses feelings of attachment, closeness, connectedness & bonded-ness.
  2. **Passion**: This encompasses drives connected to both infatuation and sexual attraction.
  3. **Commitment**: This encompasses the decision to remain with another together & the shared achievements/plans made with that other person throughout the life span.

# Preparing for Sexual Intimacy

- **Six benefits of the couple connecting spiritually:**

1. Helps in spiritual growth and intimacy
2. Symbolized by the relationship between Christ and the Church
3. Positive Communication
4. Commitment
5. Hope for the Future, and
6. Building a strong foundation

## Preparing for Sexual Intimacy

## How to build spiritual intimacy?

1. Prayer
2. Worship
3. Ministry

## ■ Things that tear love:

1. Stress
2. Satanic Assaults
3. Memories from our past
4. Sin

## ■ Things that build love:

1. Forgiveness
2. Grace



# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

- The Premarital Counselor should include information on sexuality for four key reasons:
  1. Most couples expect this topic to be addressed in some form & in some depth.
  2. Many couples are not sexually educative due to culture, beliefs and values.
  3. Many individuals are not well informed about sexual matters from peers or elders.
  4. Few couples have sensitively gone over this information together as a couple.

# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

## The **EXPLISSIT** Model:

- This model can be useful to the premarital counselor in conceptualizing the different levels of counseling required in helping couples deal with topics like sexuality and intimacy.
- Originally developed to describe four levels of intervention in sex therapy.
- It directly applies to the counselor working with premarital couples.

# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

## The EXPLISSIT Model:

- As applied to sex therapy, the four levels of intervention are represented in the word **PLISSIT** or, **P-LI-SS-IT**.
- “**P**” represents the “**Permission**” level and consists of the counselor’s simply feeling comfortable enough to convey a sense of permission to clients so that they feel free to bring up sexual matters. This is the *first* level of the model.

# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

## The EXPLISSIT Model:

- The *second* level, which often blends with permission, is providing “LI”, or, “**Limited Information**”.
- Many couples and individuals can be helped if the counselor merely provides some basic information, such as an overview of the **sexual response cycle** (*the sequence of physical and/or emotional changes during sexual activity & has four phases: excitement, plateau, orgasm and resolution*).

# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

## The EXPLISSIT Model:

- The *third* level of intervention involves “**SS**” or, “**Specific Suggestions**”, which can be viewed as the sex counseling level.
- Here, the counselor can offer suggestions to deal with specific sexual problems, or can introduce exercises that focuses on creating sensitive understanding and communication.
- The *fourth* and most complex level of intervention is “**IT**” or, “**Intensive Therapy**”. This refers to **sex therapy**.

# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

## The **EXPLISSIT** Model:

- Even though the **PLISSIT** framework guides the four levels of intervention, there is an *important ingredient missing*.
- The couple may have certain expectations about the counseling process or, about the counselor as a person, which the model does *not* include.
- Also, counselor's expectations guide his/her design and delivery of the premarital counseling process.

# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

## The EXPLISSIT Model:

- Due to this, we add “**Expectations**” to the **PLISSIT** intervention model, making the model “**EXPLISSIT**”.
- **Questions for the counselor to ask:**
  1. *What does the couple expect from the premarital counseling process?*
  2. *Why is the couple taking premarital counseling?*
  3. *What might indicate to the couple that the premarital counseling has been successful?*
  4. *What does the premarital counselor expect as a positive outcome from the couple?*

# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

## Disclaimer: Some *issues* to consider:

- The issue of whether, when and what sexual information to include in the premarital counseling process *depends* on the nature of the counseling setting.
- Clergy counselors face different issues than counseling in clinics and agency settings.
- Denominations have different attitudes towards explicit sex education.
- They have different opinions and traditions regarding the role of a Pastor as Sex Educator



# Intimacy & Sexuality in Premarital Counseling

## Disclaimer: Some *issues* to consider:

- In western countries, *most of the major Protestant denominations* support sex education, especially in the context of *pastoral premarital counseling*.
- The counselor should *check with the couple ahead of time* if they are comfortable with discussing sexual matters during counseling.
- It *may be possible* that either the couple or the parents may not perceive the Pastor an appropriate teacher for sex education.

# Summary

- Premarital Counseling is designed *primarily* to enhance intimacy in couple's relationships and *secondarily* to treat pathological issues.
- Premarital counseling is *targeted* toward couples in committed relationships who are planning to marry in the future.
- The balance among Sternberg's three aspects of love (*Intimacy, Passion & Commitment*) is likely to *shift* through the course of a relationship.
- Christians should *reaffirm* their commitment to the Biblical view of sex as a *divine gift* to be enjoyed only within marriage.

# Q & A



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