

Family Upreach, Inc.

Course V: *Christian Marriage Skills*

"Marital Staying Power-Christian Sexuality"

Lesson Thirteen

The Christian Marriage
MARITAL STAYING
POWER-CHRISTIAN
SEXUALITY

By

Alan & Shirley Sowders, B.A., M.S.

Brenda Frenzel, Buck Griffith.

Hillery M. Motsinger, Ed.D., L.P.C.

Unit 20 – Lesson 4

(NewLife Behavior English Edition)

NewLife 

B E H A V I O R

Ministries

P. O. Box 270720, Corpus Christi, Texas 78427-0720

"If any person be in Christ, he is a new creature . . ."

(Second Corinthians 5:17)

Copyright © January 1996 (Revised 2016) by H. M. Motsinger

RESPONSE SHEET

Dear Student,

We have found that thoughtful *written* responses greatly enhance the student's understanding of this course material. Therefore, we urge you to use this **Response Sheet** as an aid in the study of this lesson.



STEP 1: BEFORE YOU START

Before you start, please write three or four sentences below that describe what you think God teaches in His Word about Christian sexuality. Then, put this sheet out of sight until you finish the lesson.

STEP 2: PREPARING TO STUDY

Read the Study Questions on pages 11-12 (do not attempt to answer them now). Then read and study pages 3-10 as you would a chapter of a book.

MARITAL STAYING POWER - CHRISTIAN SEXUALITY

In this lesson we will be studying the place of sexuality in a Christian marriage. This is information that is gravely needed in this generation. Improper understanding in this area provokes problems in other areas.

Before continuing, write your definition of what God teaches us in His Word on this vital subject (using the Response Sheet section on Page 2). Then put it out of your sight until the end of this lesson. Read the entire lesson through once without looking up the scriptures. Finally, go back for a more in-depth study before completing the Study Questions on Pages 11-12.

I. Introduction

In this enlightened era, sexuality (our maleness and femaleness) is difficult for most people to deal with. It is not discussed in many families and relationships. It is a problem area in marriages. It poses major challenges in the growth and development of young people. Even in the *Christian* marriage, its proper place is often misunderstood.

This lesson will seek to bring needed light to this normally “thorny” subject and aid in developing marital skills for Christian partners.

II. How Did We Get Where We Are?

One of the reasons that a critical subject such as sexuality has become muddled and troublesome is that we no longer see creation as a gift of a benevolent God. God has been dismissed from the universe He created! Sin has been disallowed. And, the standards of godly behavior have been denied.

Since the mid-20th century, Scientism and Humanism have elevated man as supreme on the one hand and lowered him to the level of an animal on the other by stressing the *natural* and *evolutionary* lines of thought.

Consequently, sexuality has been removed from its God-designed context and has been deified in its own right.

NewLife Behavior – Course V
Unit 20 – Lesson 4

Distorted religious views have also risen to trouble many. Early church fathers (corrupted by Hellenistic views in the second and third centuries) came to see the human body as “evil” while the spirit or soul was *good*. Also, they taught that celibacy was the truly spiritual path and that marriage was a poor second. Married sexual relations were okayed as a *necessary evil* for the sake of procreation but otherwise . . . sex was a curse.

When false teachings like these have gone on for many centuries (and otherwise well-meaning folks have kept their mouths closed on the subject), it is easy to see why people are confused.

We are much like the Corinthian church in our century. We are beset on the one hand by sexual asceticism (rigorous self-denial) and rising permissiveness on the other. It is no wonder that we are torn and perplexed (First Corinthians 7:1-5; 6:12-20).



In the Middle Ages, there was a rise in *romanticism* which tended to elevate the beloved and much effort was made to win the love of the other. Romanticism in our own day may be an adhesive to hold folks together but we fall into fantasy and disillusionment. We are encouraged to *seek* the right person while ignoring the need to be the right person. Looking for someone that “God designed just for us” is no help when the one we have finally selected fails to measure up.

Besides these factors, we live in a society that emphasizes that we be *pleasure seekers*. We desire to experience sexual relations without intimate attachment or accepting responsibility in such matters. Youth is encouraged to base sexual practices on “loving that person” while a definition of love is never given.

Most ignorantly play with a mighty force they are unprepared to handle, coupled with irresponsibility which finally leads to major societal problems like:

“Babies having babies” -
Abortion on demand -
Sexually transmitted diseases.

No wonder marriages do not last long. No wonder marriage therapists are in such high demand. We are in serious trouble.

NewLife Behavior – Course V
Unit 20 – Lesson 4

III. The Edenic Order: What God Had in Mind (“In the Beginning...”)

If you study Genesis (Chapters 1 and 2), certain things are clearly contextual for sexuality as a blessing for mankind. Genesis 1 contains man’s context for living and Genesis 2 holds man’s context for *loving*.

1. There was a reverence toward God and His creation as fundamental concepts. Doing the will of God was paramount. Genesis 1:31 tells us that God saw His creation in all its aspects as “very good.”
2. Man was created as a body-soul unit and both soul and body were seen by God as “good.” There was no – “good soul, bad body” – as men later taught. Anything created in the image of God is of the highest spiritual order. Man was made from dust but animated by the creative voice of God – a living psycho-sexual being (as seen in Genesis 2:7, Psalm 104:29-30 and Job 34:14-15).
3. Mankind, in the image of God, possessed a God-assigned dignity and a God-assigned mission of being God’s agents in dominion over all creation. Man and woman share equally in this God-given vocation.



4. God (in Genesis 1:28) commanded fruitful procreation of the man and woman in Eden, accompanied by mutual affection and intimacy in equal partnership. In Adam’s glad statement (“bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh”), is revealed kinship and loving affinity between the first two people. God had brought them together and Adam speaks of leaving father and mother, cleaving unto his wife, and becoming one flesh (indicating sociability and companionship as God’s correlates of reproduction). Both man and his wife were naked and unashamed. This indicates uninhibited sexual expression in the context of mutual love and commitment.
5. By way of summary of the Genesis account, consider . . .
 - A. Man and woman are united in a permanent, monogamous relationship, as part of

NewLife Behavior – Course V
Unit 20 – Lesson 4

God's excellent creation. Thus, the sexual relationship is holy, God-designed, and commanded.

- B. The meaning of sexuality in the beginning is seen in the reciprocal, personal relationship, sealed in the flesh through sexual intercourse, resulting in the bearing of children.
- C. Man's response to God's creation and order was *thanksgiving*. He rejoiced in God's gift of sexuality which unites, blesses, fulfills and pleasures them both.
- D. Sexuality needs to be seen as a beautiful, intimate relationship shared uniquely by husband and wife in the privacy of their love. God designed it for blessing both husband and wife in their married state.

IV. When the Wheels Came Off

Listening to Satan's voice, Eve (and then Adam) decided to turn their backs on the authority of God to direct their lives. They chose the course of self-will over the Will of God. For the first time, they knew "good and evil" (just as Satan promised).

The impact of sin is clearly seen in Genesis 3:7-10 . . .

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden and I was afraid; so I hid."

The result of their sin ("their eyes were opened") made them aware of their nakedness. Shame was bound up with their sexuality and the token of their lost innocence was the covering of fig leaves. They were alienated from God so they were alienated from each other. In attempting to fix responsibility for his sin on God and his partner, the couple found their "us-ness" and "one fleshness" shattered!

The first sin was not sexual but sin affects all relationships, including this one. The result of sin is . . .

SHAME,

SELFISHNESS,

SELF-CENTERNESS, and

SEPARATENESS

This is the complete reversal of the God-given intimate, sexual love and unity in the marriage relationship. The broken condition of the marital relationship and the sad

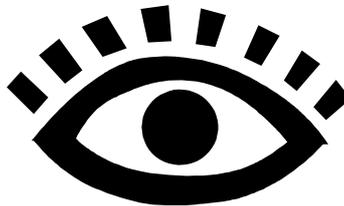
NewLife Behavior – Course V
Unit 20 – Lesson 4

condition of sexuality because of sin are seen as the Bible continues to unfold . . .

- A. There is the rise of polygamy beginning in Genesis 4:19-24.
- B. The satisfaction of lust with prostitutes is practiced by one of the Lord's great men – Samson (Judges 16:1-3).
- C. Samson's further decline into unbridled passion that enslaves is described in Judges 16:4-21 (in his tryst with Delilah).
- D. David, the sweet singer of Israel, finds himself embroiled in an adulterous tangle with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, which led to murder (Second Samuel 11:2-5).
- E. And, in the downward spiral of shattered sexuality, sexual perversions were seen in Sodom (Genesis 18-19) and are chronicled by Paul in Romans 1:18-32.

One of the most troublesome spin-offs of sin is a false hunger for individuality or self-centeredness, which leads to the evil desire referred to by Jesus in Matthew 5:27-28.

***You have heard that it is said, "Do not commit adultery."
But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully
has already committed adultery with her in his heart.***



The reversal of God's order is seen in loveless sexual desire which is the impersonal, consistently selfish and covetous ways in which another's body is used to satisfy sexual cravings. Sexuality has thus become a selfish sensuality, a tool of Satan to enslave, corrupt and destroy.

God's creation to bless man and woman has been wrenched out of its beneficial context and has become harmful. Such misuse springs from a sinful heart that denies God the power to direct his or her life.

V. Take the "Eden" Exit

As we attempt to develop a Christian marriage and understand the place of sexuality in this relationship, we may have to recognize and admit that we are "lost on the freeway." We have had so many things thrown at us and the available examples may have been at cross-purposes with what we need to do.

It does not help to continue in false ways. If we wish to travel the narrow way that leads to life, it is only proper to examine again God's plan for man in Eden. "Following the

NewLife Behavior – Course V
Unit 20 – Lesson 4

crowd” leads to where the “crowd” is headed . . . destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). My advice? “Take the **Eden Exit!**”



Only in this way can we regain the place Jesus said was lost due to a “hardness of heart” in Matthew 19:6. Note that our Lord reminds us of what was proper “in the beginning.” A God-designed sexuality needs to be maintained.

Only in this way will woman regain her place of equal dignity with man that is available in Christ (Galatians 3:28). The denigration [*lowering*] and domination of woman ends when she takes her place as equal partner and fellow heir of the “grace of life” (First Peter 3:7). Too often “Christian” men have thought that the woman is somehow inferior *but that is not the picture in Eden.*

Only in this way will the beneficial roles of husband and wife (male and female) be established, please God and benefit the Christian family (Ephesians 5:21-32; First Peter 3:1-12). This has been a battleground in our society of late. We must understand that *submission* is not synonymous with *inferiority*.

Only in this way will the relationship of husband and wife know again the closeness and unity that is mentioned as “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.” When men (and women) leave their parents and cleave unto their mate in love and commitment, there is a sweet liberation from all other distractions that would threaten their marital relationship. That is what Adam said by the inspiration of God in Eden.

Only by returning to Eden can sexuality find its proper context under the oversight of God in the husband and wife relationship. Married sexual relations is the physical expression of spiritual love and unity, clearly defining the “one flesh” idea in Genesis 2:24-25 and Ephesians 5:31.

Only in this way will sexuality be seen as a gift of God, the expression of commitment and belonging – not a momentary spasm. Sexuality expressed God’s way is the expression of a liberated life – not a symptom of sensual slavery (First Corinthians 6:12-20; 7:3-5).

To fend off the selfish use of sexuality there needs to be a co-inspired love of persons

NewLife Behavior – Course V
Unit 20 – Lesson 4

as the deterrent to greedy and impersonal sex (Ephesians 2:11-17; 5:21-32). Loving one another as the Lord Jesus loved us (John 13:34-35) is the only sure-fire, God-approved way to love.

VI. For Further Study and Consideration

- A. Be aware that celibacy and marriage are equally gifts of God and neither is to be rated “more spiritual” than the other. Whether people are married or single, they are pleasing to God in that role (First Corinthians 7:1-21, 32-35).
- B. The conjugal rights of each partner in a Christian marriage are equal, and proper fulfillment and enjoyment flows from mutual joyful participation (First Corinthians 7:4-5).
- C. Husband and wife belong together in a mutuality of loving concern (Galatians 5:3; First Corinthians 7:4) based on a covenant to love. Openness and vulnerability should characterize them and they should commit themselves to faithfulness and forgiveness.
- D. A Christian marriage is a covenant of mutual love and a commitment to intimacy. They will understand that all of their intimacy is not bound up in sexual fulfillment. Prior sexual experience is neither beneficial nor desired. As they “grow up in Christ,” married partners see the need to mature sexually. Therefore, they learn to communicate in an honest and loving way (Ephesians 4:15) about all aspects of their sexuality, because it is good and important. They need to be sensitive in such discussions because honesty without love wounds deeply. If they move into areas where sexual problems arise, it should not lead to panic or a sudden desire to dissolve the marriage. Problems are just stages of growing up together in this rich blessing of God.
- E. In order to meet one another’s deep soul/body needs sexually, we need to learn to “love one’s neighbor [our partner] as ourselves.” Overall, the marital relationship must move toward mutual concern, affection, and attention to the needs of each other. We need to be gentle and understanding with the other partner if at any time they are reserved or timid in things of a sexual nature. Taking the time we need and being patient with each other is what “loving” really is.

Additional advice is at hand in the Word of God. Human sexuality is an interesting Bible topic and should be studied by all.

1. Read the Song of Solomon, especially 2:3-17 and 4:1-7 as poetic descriptions of physical loving are described.

NewLife Behavior – Course V
Unit 20 – Lesson 4

2. Read Proverbs 1-9 as Solomon instructs his son in how to control the strong sexual drive God has given us.
3. Note Proverbs 5:18-19 where God lets us know that sexual behavior is intended for pleasure and not simply as an effort at procreation. Note also that God watches over even this area of our life and approves (5:1).
4. Read First Corinthians 7:2-5 and note the following points:
 - a) Both husband and wife have sexual needs and drives that should be fulfilled in marriage.
 - b) When one marries, he/she forfeits control of his/her body sexually to his/her partner.
 - c) Both are forbidden to refuse to meet the mate's sexual needs.
 - d) The act of sex in marriage is approved by God. It is a beautiful expression of Philippians 2:4.
5. Hebrews 13:4 says "marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled: But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." To God and man, marriage is honorable and the "bed" is *pure*. Sexual expressions between married partners are sacred. The word translated "bed" in the Greek New Testament is actually "coitus" – the word meaning sexual intercourse. Thus, married sexual activities are not sinful or soiled but occupy a place of great honor within marriage. You might say that sexuality is the *holy of holies* where husband and wife meet privately to celebrate their love.

Author's Note: I have borrowed greatly from the writings of my brother in Christ, Jim Reynolds ([Secrets of Eden: God & Human Sexuality](#)) along with thoughts from Ed Wharton's book, [Love Life for Every Married Couple](#). I recommend these little volumes as well as [The Act of Marriage](#) by Tim and Beverly La Hay and [Celebration in the Bedroom](#) by Charlie & Martha Shedd.

PERSONAL NOTE IN CLOSING:

These lessons are sent along to you with our prayers and encouragement that you may come to know Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord as you bow the knee and bring your life in line with His will.

Shirley and I have enjoyed the preparation and teaching of these concepts and we have drawn extensively from the labors of others to bring them to you. We have added little that was original with us except our experiences in trying to follow Jesus in our 44+ years of living together as husband and wife. Our life has been a hymn of praise to Him and we thank Him every day for bringing us together. At the age of 20 and 17, we didn't have sense enough to know what was needed . . . but God did! *Thanks be to Him!*

If we may be of service to you in any way in making your life in Christ better, especially in your marriage, feel free to call upon us. God's blessings be upon all who depend on the blood of Jesus!

Alan & Shirley Sowders, Authors

NewLife Behavior – Course V
Unit 20 – Lesson 4
Session #13

STUDY QUESTIONS

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

1. We have reached a state of confusion because
 - (a) we left God out of the picture
 - (b) distorted religious teachings
 - (c) society encourages pleasure seeking
 - (d) all the above

2. Some early religious leaders taught
 - (a) sex is just for fun
 - (b) the body is evil-the spirit is good
 - (c) sex is from Satan
 - (d) it can't be wrong when it feels so right

3. God gave us these gifts
 - (a) ability to choose
 - (b) sex
 - (c) a brain and a plan
 - (d) all the above

4. Babies having babies, sexually transmitted diseases, etc., is
 - (a) God's fault
 - (b) OK
 - (c) evidence we have not followed God's plan
 - (d) none of the above

5. Sexuality – as God designed it in marriage – is
 - (a) pleasurable
 - (b) the most intimate human relationship
 - (c) a blessing to both spouses
 - (d) all the above

6. More than “sex”, the glue that holds a marriage together is
 - (a) a nice house
 - (b) country living
 - (c) a strong pleasure-seeking drive
 - (d) a spiritual “closeness” in the relationship

7. "Sex" outside marriage leaves us feeling
 - (a) guilty
 - (b) unfulfilled
 - (c) shameful
 - (d) all the above

8. Returning to God's plan is
 - (a) unrealistic
 - (b) impossible
 - (c) too hard
 - (d) the only pathway to true peace and happiness

9. Being married or remaining single is
 - (a) a choice
 - (b) one is sinful, the other is not
 - (c) against God's teachings
 - (d) none of the above

10. Each partner in marriage is to consider his or her body as belonging to
 - (a) their parents
 - (b) each other
 - (c) no one
 - (d) only themselves

REFLECTION

Write a few sentences new ideas you learned about Christian sexuality.

APPLYING THE LESSON

Finally, to get the most from your study, list one or more ideas that you want to use to change your behavior. Also, list questions you want to ask your instructor or studymate.