

BEGINNING THE DIALOGUE: ADDRESSING SEXUAL ISSUES

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Why Pastors Must be Equipped to Deal with Sexual Issues

- ▣ The pervasiveness of *sexual brokenness in our culture*
- ▣ People *want* to come to their pastors first when there is a problem
- ▣ Where can committed Christians go when there is a sexual problem?
- ▣ Expected in pre-marital counseling
- ▣ Our churches often lack a Biblical theology of marriage and sexuality
- ▣ We end up with the Larry Norman syndrome...

The Need to Address Sexual Issues

" As we ushered the lost into the church with all of their sexual brokenness –their trauma, perversions, beliefs, and practices - we admonished them to put away their evil ways but struggled to give them a vision of God's original plan for sexual intimacy. We have somehow failed to redeem and sanctify sex. It has seemed

too worldly, too fleshly; we haven't been sure what to do with it. Most seminary degrees do not require even a single course in it. Many of our premarital counseling programs barely touch on the subject. Intellectually we know it is part of God's design and is therefore good, but practically speaking we have largely left couples to fumble around with it, trying to figure out how it works and God's original plan for it. As a result, couples have looked back to the culture for the instruction the church has failed to give."

When Two Become One

McCluskey

Toward a Theology of Sex

- ▣ God created sex, and it is good!
- ▣ While we may be bashful about sex, the Bible is not...
- ▣ Song of Solomon; Proverbs 4, 5, 6; Exodus 10, and the "*ONAH*"...
- ▣ The Christian Fathers were often wrong in their outlook...
- ▣ Three purposes of sex...
- ▣ The human body is meant to excite! The Penners' story...

Sexual Communication

Talking about sex is not easy for most of us!

Yet, it is helpful to remember that God created sex...it is His wonderful and mysterious creation...

Our goal is to help couples be able to talk with each other about this most important area of marriage, and experience freedom and congruence within their faith...

Couples can *enhance sexual intimacy* through dialogue and negotiation...and thereby strengthen their marriages...

Why Sex is Hard to Talk About

- ▣ Lack of knowledge (Experience doesn't equal knowledge or wisdom.)
- ▣ Inadequate language
- ▣ Complexity of gender, physiology, and desire
- ▣ Family/cultural confusion and myths
- ▣ Unresolved sexual hurts & wounds
- ▣ Powerful for manipulation or intimacy
- ▣ Personally & relationally private

6 Types of Sexual Language

- ▣ Kiddie Language (pee pee)
- ▣ Adult Slang (boobs, boner)
- ▣ Euphemisms (bottom, down there)
- ▣ Clinical (penis, vagina)
- ▣ Poetic (my garden)
- ▣ Contemporary cultural phrases (coming together, hooking up, lovemaking)

THE DEC-R MODEL

Dialogue, Education, Coaching
& Referral

Foundational Skills of Sex Counseling

Understanding DEC-R Skills

- ▣ Dialogue – Educate – Coach – Refer
- ▣ Not sequential but will utilize all of DEC-R over and over at different times throughout sex counseling
- ▣ All pastors need these basic skills to be an effective counselor because sexuality is such a core part of life and relationships

Effective Dialogue: Stems from The Pastor's Growth

- ▣ The people you try to help will reflect your discomfort
- ▣ You can only take someone as far as you have been willing to grow and learn
- ▣ *Create your own sexual theology* as you integrate God's sexual principles into your life and counseling
- ▣ Possess and make peace with your own sexuality. Develop character and sexual integrity

Dialogue

- ▣ The counselor is responsible for beginning and continuing the sexual dialogue---you give permission and help them to become more comfortable talking about sexuality
- ▣ **If YOU don't begin the dialogue, it probably won't happen!**
- ▣ This helps them create a vocabulary by your modeling. (Have them read books out loud to one another.)

Beginning the Dialogue

- The magic question:

“How is the sexual part of your life/relationship?”

Educate

- ▣ Myths and Unrealistic Expectations: Dispute Them with Facts

Female Mythology

- ▣ Women's sexual desire should be the same as men's sexual desire
- ▣ Women don't enjoy sex as much as men
- ▣ My body doesn't measure up – I'm too big here or too small there
- ▣ My husband should know how I think and feel
- ▣ I should always desire an orgasm

Educate

- ▣ **Myths and Unrealistic Expectations:
Dispute them with Facts**

Male Mythology

- Men know all about sex
- The size of my penis determines my manliness and ability as a lover
- Men are always horny and erections come instantly
- Sex equals intimacy
- The Nymphomaniac Fantasy: If I had the right woman she would want sex all the time and react just like I do as a man
- She should think about/want sex as much as me

Coaching

- ▣ Normalize normal sexual behaviors and struggles
- ▣ Recognize abnormal situations that will require a sex therapist
- ▣ Determine if too many needs are trying to be met through sex
- ▣ Encourage dating, romance, and friendship (often Christians have a “child-focused marriage”)
- ▣ Have a book list that you can refer to (included at end of notes)

When to Make a Referral

- ▣ Accessing medical and other professional help to assist therapy...
- ▣ Referring when additional training and skill level is warranted...
- ▣ Keep yourself safe by remaining a pastor, and not attempting to do the work of a clinician or medical advisor (“scope of practice”)

Referral: How to Make a Referral

- ▣ Coach couples on why you are making a referral
- ▣ Tell them what information to be sure and tell the professional resource to get the needed help
- ▣ Follow through and don't assume they will make contact---assist and follow up
- ▣ Let them know you will assist with another referral if the first is not a good fit

Sexual Satisfaction Studies

- ▣ Redbook Magazine, 1975; 100,000 women. Religious women rated their sexual satisfaction and responsiveness higher than any other demographic.
- ▣ 1994 National Health and Social Life Survey, (U. of Chicago); 3400 sample size...Type II Protestants most sexually satisfied...
- ▣ 1998 Secrets of Eve, 2000 Evangelical Women...
- ▣ Virtually all studies, secular and religious, find religious conservatives to be the most sexually satisfied demographic of all...

Useful References

- ▣ *Celebration of Sex*, Douglas Rosenau
- ▣ *Celebration of Sex over 50*, Douglas Rosenau, Jim and Carolyn Childerston
- ▣ *Secrets of Eve*, Hart, Weber & Debra Taylor
- ▣ *When Two Become One*, Christopher and Rachel McCluskey
- ▣ *Restoring the Pleasure*, Clifford and Joyce Penner
- ▣ *Soul Virgins*, Rosenau and Wilson
- ▣ *Homosexuality: The use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate*, Mark Yarhouse
- ▣ *Sexual Identity*, Mark Yarhouse and Lori Burkett
- ▣ *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*, Mark Laaser
- ▣ *The Married Guys Guide to Great Sex*, Penner and Penner
- ▣ *Every Man's Battle*, Arterburn, Stoeker, & Yorkey
- ▣ *Intimate Issues*, Dillow & Pintus
- ▣ *Shattered Vows*, Debra Laaser
- ▣ *Mending The Soul*, Stephen Tracy