Physical Intimacy

Sheet Music by Kevin Leman

Sheet Music covers many aspects of intimacy, including romance, mechanics, some tough questions on sex, and problem areas. We recommend you study this component towards the end of your time with your group, primarily so that they feel more open and honest in discussing physical intimacy with one another. Our desire is that you will discuss some of the material together; however, a lot of your discussion will probably take place divided into men and women.

This study will provide couples with the opportunity to share any hurts, struggles, or unmet expectations they may have in their relationship. As best you feel comfortable, lead the way in being vulnerable about your own marriage and intimacy issues.

While this is the best book we have found on this topic for followers of Christ, we do not agree with everything the author states or believes. Specifically, Leman has some views on self-stimulation that we disagree with. However, we still believe this is an extremely helpful resource for couples in the area of sexual intimacy.

Primary Takeaways:

- Sex is a gift from God, and is intended to help couples grow in oneness
- Satisfaction in physical intimacy is closely related to how well couples communicate.
- The saying that ‘sex starts in the kitchen’ may be cliché, but there is great truth to this saying.
- Like all aspects of marriage, expectations of physical intimacy between a husband and wife need to be discussed consistently.
- Physical intimacy is an area in which couples often cope or cut deals with one another and, as a result don’t experience God’s best in His design of sex and physical intimacy.

Reading Schedule:

1. Session 1 – Overview (leader couple, no reading) & Chapter 1 – 3 [together]
2. Session 2 – Chapter 5-7 [split guys/girls]
3. Session 3 – Chapter 8-11 [split guys/girls]
4. Session 4 – Chapter 12-13 [together]

Prior To Each Group Meeting:

1. Complete the assigned reading
2. Go over the homework questions with your spouse and write down your answers.
3. Review the discussion questions and be prepared to discuss your answers during the group meeting.
4. Remind couples, if they’re having trouble in this area of their marriage that they are not alone, you are here to help, and Watermark has a lot of resources to help.
Session 1 | Overview, Chapters 1-3

Overview

Here are some thoughts on how to start this discussion in your Foundation Group. We completely acknowledge that this is a very difficult topic to talk through for just about every couple. But, sexual intimacy is integral to our marriages. It is a topic that can often divide couples, and therefore should be discussed with people who love God and care for our marriages.

Review the following with your group prior to starting the first discussion:

People often think of sex in one of 3 ways:
1. **Sex is god** – all of life has been and is about the pursuit of “sex” – premarital, pornography, dating, etc....
2. **Sex is gross** – sex is not what it is intended to be – either from pain in the past, abuse, pornography, etc...
3. **Sex is a gift** – sex rightly viewed as a gift from our loving creator for married couples

Biblical view on sex (good idea to read these passages):
- The body is good and sex is good – God created us as physical beings, and gave us sex for marriage – **Genesis 1:27, 31** In the beginning – no comparison, porn, body image
- Sex is good – from God; **Genesis 1:28** – be fruitful & multiply; have sex!
- Sex is a gift – **Genesis 1 & 2** – from God, a gift from God for married couples | Eat & drink your fill - **Song of Solomon 5:1**

It’s a joy of our heavenly Father to give good gifts to His children:
- We use His great gift to hurt one another – i.e. abusing sex
- Opportunity to glorify God – **1 Corinthians 10:31**
- God is shown to be great by the way we make love to one another

Goals of this study:
- Improved communication in this area - difficult to pursue oneness if there are marriage topics that a husband and wife cannot discuss
- Shift the focus off of ourselves and onto how we can serve our spouse
- Help us to better enjoy God’s gift

Ground rules on discussions:
1. Frank discussion at times (i.e. oral sex, positions) – some discussion will be together, some will be split up into men/women
2. Approach with an open mind – we all can and should grow in this area (including Foundation Group leaders)
3. Give an earnest effort – do homework, read chapters, discuss with one another

Ask: are there any other questions or concerns before we begin this session?
Chapter One | A Tale of Two Couples

Chapter 1 looks at two different couples with two different stories and points out the importance of sexual intimacy in marriage. If you don’t treat sex with extreme importance in marriage, then you are shortchanging yourself, your spouse, and your family. In fact, a couple’s sex life is usually a microcosm of the marriage. When sex is either desperately asked for or grudgingly given, no one is fulfilled. Leman writes of ‘designer sex’, which refers to the fact that sex is a gift from God and a commandment from God. Because of the importance of sexual intimacy, the stakes are high – sex cannot be ignored, or just merely tolerated, in marriage.

Chapter Two – A Crowded Bed

Leman writes that the marriage bed is one of the most crowded places on the face of the earth. Our view of sexual intimacy is formed in large part by, among other things, our birth order, parents, and childhood experiences. Specifically, we are often shaped by our opposite-sex parent, where we fall in our family’s birth order (i.e. last born, first born, middle born), early childhood memories (where you learn that the world is either a safe or dangerous place), and our sexual past as adults. One issue couples often struggle through is how much to share from the past with one another – Leman states that sharing specifics often causes more problems than it solves.

Chapter Three | Shake, Rattle & Roll! Why a good sex life is worth striving for

Leman writes that a fulfilling sex life is one of the most powerful marital glues. He spends a great deal of time in this chapter discussing the importance of mutual submission in your marriage. He proposes that instead of making sex something we demand, that we make it something that we offer one another. He also lays down a challenge for men to do a better job of pursuing their wife outside of the bedroom, and for women to have a more active role in pursuing their husband in the bedroom. Overall this chapter gives a good breakdown of some of the benefits to having a great sex life.
Sessions 2 | Chapters 5 – 7

Chapters 5-7 cover some very intimate topics, such as positions, orgasm, and oral sex. Please read these chapters and discuss the homework questions with your spouse. You will then split up men/women to discuss some various topics from these chapters.

Chapter Five | A Very Special Connection: Sexual Positions

With sexual intimacy, we have great freedom in enjoying different positions and techniques with our spouse. However, our culture often tries to replace intimacy with sexual technique. Couples often need to work on their relationship before they worry about trying different positions or technique. Sex is about the quality of your entire love life, not just the alignment of your bodies.

Most couples settle for a few basic positions; God gives couples great freedom with regard to intimacy and positions. Leman details out several positions and variations on each position in this chapter, as well as some benefits and challenges with each position. He describes lovemaking as an art, and it is what you do with the position, rather than the position itself, that results in satisfying sex.

Chapter Six | The Big “O”

Two of the most common issues with sexual intimacy are related to orgasms:
- Women often have trouble achieving orgasms.
- Men often have trouble with reaching orgasm too quickly (premature ejaculation).

Remember that the goal of sexuality is not to orgasm, but to express oneness and intimacy with your mate. Leman shares several suggestions for women in helping them to reach orgasm, and for men in order to prolong the time until they climax. Both husband and wife may have some work to do, but women can learn to have orgasms and men can learn to delay theirs.

While we think Sheet Music is a very helpful book on sexual intimacy, we don’t necessarily agree with everything the author writes. For instance, in this chapter, Leman suggests self-stimulation techniques in helping couples to achieve orgasm. Watermark does not think masturbation is appropriate for individuals, especially if associated with pornography in any form; in general, self-stimulation promotes selfishness; rather, in sexual intimacy, individuals need to focus on meeting the needs of their spouse, not on their own individual needs.

Chapter Seven | Oral Delights

While individuals often look upon oral sex with disdain, God gives married couples great freedom when it comes to activities such as oral sex. Several passages speak to expressing passion in creative ways (Song of Solomon 2:3, 4:16, 5:1, 6:2-3, 7:2, 8:2). Practically, make sure you practice good personal hygiene when it comes to oral sex.

However, as with any position or sexual technique, no partner should be forced to do something he or she finds to be disagreeable or immoral. Never, ever force your mate to do anything they don’t want to do.
Chapter Eight | For Men Only & Chapter Nine | For Women Only

Chapters eight and nine discuss issues that tend to be more specific to men and women. Men need to practice good hygiene – this is often one of the biggest turnoffs/stumbling blocks for women. When it comes to being with your wife, for the most part, she wants your touch to be subtle. For most women, in order to reach climax, the clitoris will have to be manually or orally stimulated. Usually husbands will need their wives help in being in tune with what brings them pleasure – good communication is necessary. Make sure your wife knows you desire her more than you desire sex; make it personal, passionate, and relational. The best way to improve your sex life, including your wife’s desire for you, is to focus on the other 95% of your marriage and build that up.

Men want to please their wives, and often get hurt more easily than women realize. When men get rejected by their wives, it is often damaging to them in many ways. In general, men enjoy spontaneity when it comes to sexuality, most men desire oral sex, and men desire their wives to be generous with them sexually. A wife has the option to either make her husband feel like the luckiest man on the earth, or by repeated denials, remarks, and resentment, she can emasculate him and make him feel miserable.

Chapter Ten | Thirty-One Flavors

This chapter addresses creativity in romance and sexual intimacy. Some of his ideas may be offensive to some, but the chapter stresses the importance of not being stuck in routines and ruts when it comes to intimacy. Many of his suggestions appeal to the senses (smell, touch, taste, sight, sound). He also addresses questions related to what is or is not permissible in the bedroom, including sex toys, pornography, and anal sex.

When Watermark leaders address this issue, we seek to be firm where the scriptures are firm, and flexible where the scriptures are flexible. To that end, we have established some thoughts on what is or is not permissible. It is not permissible if it involves others outside of husband and wife (i.e. other people, pornography), animals, and if it hurts or if one partner is adamantly opposed. Other than that, there is much gray. We would advise exercising caution with sex toys because the sensations they create can be unnatural, difficult to reproduce, and usually don’t build lasting intimacy. Anal sex, when mentioned in scripture, is associated with sinful acts and homosexuality, and the anus is not intended to be used for intercourse; both partners should be very comfortable with anal sex if practiced in marriage. Last, we believe there is no place for pornography in marriage. Often, men and women bring ideas into the bedroom that are fueled by pornography and do not build intimacy between husband and wife.

Chapter Eleven | Turning Off the Turnoffs

Many of us bring past history or habits into our marriage that can steal away intimacy with our spouse in the present and future. For example, we may come into marriage with a poor view of intimacy based on what we learned from our parents (i.e. sex is dirty and is to be avoided at all costs); rather, we need to remember that God is very pro-sex in marriage and that the Bible is a very descriptive book.
Session 4 | Chapters 12 & 13

Chapter Twelve | Sex's Greatest Enemy

For women, the greatest enemy of sex is weariness and exhaustion. If you and your spouse want to make your family life and sexual life more meaningful, you’re probably going to have to give up a few things in your schedules. In addition, Leman recommends getting away for weekends and making sure you are getting date nights away from your children. For most men, the greatest enemy of sex is a lack of imagination on the part of their wives. If he doesn’t feel pursued or wanted, many husbands quickly lose interest in sexual intimacy.

Chapter Thirteen | Your Sexual IQ

Many couples are very ignorant of their spouse’s sexual preferences. This can be explained by several different reasons. First, many individuals come into marriage with past sexual experiences that can lead to comparison and unrealistic expectations. Second, many of our expectations are fueled by either media or pornography, rather than from actually talking with our spouse. In addition, most of us don’t know how to discuss sexual intimacy with our spouse – specifically, we have trouble bringing up difficult topics and we’re afraid to be assertive in expressing our desires sexually.

Leman writes that there are four areas of seduction – visual, kinesthetic (touch), auditory, and relational (emotional care and nurture). Often we don’t know which of these areas our spouse most highly values.