

HIS & HERS



Learning from the Gender You're Not

Part 1: Learning Together as Humans

Part 2: Learning Together as Friends

Part 3: Learning Together as Family

Part 4: Learning Together as the Church

Part 5: Hot Seat Sunday

INTRODUCTION – Repression, Expression, & Stewardship

Genesis 2:24

- OUR GRANDPARENT'S GENERATION: We're different, so marriage is for procreation and child rearing. This resulted in primary friendships being sought outside of marriage.
- OUR PARENT'S GENERATION: We're mostly the same, so we can be friends in marriage. This resulted in a culture of political correctness that led to denying or shaming sexual differences.
- THE BIBLICAL ATTITUDE: Because we are different, we should move *toward* one another in celebration and understanding (e.g., **Genesis 1-2**; **1 Corinthians 12**; etc.)

We used to REPRESS – that led to legalism.

Then we learned to EXPRESS – without love, that led to brokenness.

But the Bible teaches us to STEWARD our sexuality in loving ways.

SCIENCE & SCRIPTURE – Living With Our Differences

Philippians 2:3-4

- **Pheromones**: Armpit-produced scents that elicit unconscious sexual desire (particularly in women).
- **Dopamine**: Causes fantasizing, desire, and addiction. It is the "I can't stop thinking about you" chemical. Closest thing to a love potion we have (e.g., *A Midsummer Night's Dream*).
- **Phenylethylamine (PEA)**: Creates feelings of wellbeing and romance. Increased by exercise and chocolate.
- **Oxytocin**: Contributes to bonding, attachment, relational trust, and exclusivity. Deemed the "cuddle chemical". Works against testosterone. Released when being cuddled, stroked, or when seeing a baby.
- **Testosterone**: Increases desire in both men and women. As testosterone rises, levels of oxytocin diminish, and vice versa.

LOOK TO THE BOOK – Being Married To (Gasp) The Other Sex!

Helen Fisher (2004) identified three near-universal phases or manifestations of pair-bonding relationships:

- 1) Lust – Being attracted in the moment.
- 2) Infatuation – A kind of romantic ideal that lasts 3-12 months.
- 3) Attachment – A long-term nurturing, growing relationship.

1 Corinthians 7:1-7; 25-28

TAKE OUT #1: Remember that the fact something may be instinctive or natural doesn't mean that it is good for us. The brain circuitry of a moth causes it to fly into the fire. It doesn't help a moth to protest, "But I was born this way!" Keep this in mind as you try to learn from the gender you're not and grow past your own base biological inclinations. It helps to be aware of your animal side – as long as you remember you are more than an animal.

TAKE OUT #2: When looking for a mate, enjoy each stage of a relationship with your eyes open and your mind awake. Stay mindful of the transient nature of the lust and infatuation phases. *Never make a lasting decision in a temporary state of mind.*

TAKE OUT #3: Reject the pathological approach to marriage (i.e., "What's wrong with our marriage?") in favour of the biblical model. Recast the problems in your marriage as opportunities for spiritual and psychological growth. Nothing will help develop you as a person better. In this light, always offer and welcome loving feedback – we can't learn and grow without it.

TAKE OUT #4: Create shared experiences together in marriage that involve novelty, risk, humour, sex, face-to-face balanced with shoulder-to-shoulder, and even the shared experience of absence (which raises Dopamine levels).

TAKE OUT #5: Prioritize validating each other's diverse core strengths. Keep criticism and correction a secondary aspect of communication. If you've lost the ability to praise your spouse, you've lost the right to criticise them. When you do correct your spouse, do so with warmth and humour, and in private. Praise in private as well as in public.

TAKE OUT #6: Seek to better understand, appreciate, and steward your spouse's sex-differentiated brain struggles. Offer your spouse a biblical mix of loving accountability (**James 5:16**) mixed with empathetic understanding (**Galatians 6:1-2**).

CONCLUSION – Celebrating Our "Gift"

1 Corinthians 7:7

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. Goethe said: "Love is an ideal thing; marriage is a real thing. A confusion of the real with the ideal never goes unpunished." How does this thought relate to the use of pornography by men and romance novels by women?

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Read **1 Corinthians 7**. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) What are some possible scenarios to which **verses 3-4** would bring helpful guidance? How would you apply the principles of these verses? C) How might **verse 9** seem like an unfair taunt to homosexual people wanting to follow Jesus? D) To be "holy" or "sanctified" means to be set apart (e.g., for a special purpose, advantage, or calling). With that in mind, what do you think is the message of **verses 12-14**? E) Reread **verses 32-35**. List the advantages and disadvantages of the "gifts" of marriage and singleness. F) How does **verse 39** inform the question of whether Christians should marry people who do not share their same faith? ?) Myth: "The purpose of marriage is to make us happy." How does **verse 28** help refresh and recalibrate our understanding of the purpose of marriage?

SO WHAT?...

3. What "Take Out" most applies to you at this point in your life? What are you going to do about it?

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, October 19, 2008