

## *Making Time for Making Love* *Jeff and Jill Williams*

The title got you didn't it? I'm surprised I'm writing it, and I'm surprised she let me. But we're both convinced this has to be talked about in a real way, so we're willing to expose our own sex-life as a case study for others. From our perch as marriage coaches it appears that couple's struggles with intimacy is epidemic. Frankly, we're appalled by extent of the problem that many report about their sex-life, or lack thereof.

Most couples we talk to say one of two things: *"It's been months since we had sex"*, or *"We can't remember the last time, and it's never really been good."* No wonder he's tempted with porn, and no wonder she's seeking intimacy in other relationships. Whether the reach for immoral or seemingly innocuous substitutes is a chicken or an egg it's still a problem, a big, big problem, and it's time WE (The Church) do something about it. One couple at a time we can do something about it and it is imperative for Christ that we do.

A strong, potent Church is comprised of strong, healthy couples and families. So, improving our sex-lives is mission critical for the Great Commission. Is this hitting home? If so, and you're in pain, frustrated and feeling hopeless we're sorry, and we want to help. We know it's a sad and dangerous situation. In our marriage of twenty-three years we've been there. And we want you to know there's hope. Please don't give up. Don't settle for less than abundant, pleasurable, healthy intimacy. It's important; much more important than we've generally acknowledged. But the way God made us and what He wants for us can't be denied.

I'm certain that prior to their fall that Adam and Eve were romping around the garden enjoying every aspect of each other's wonderfully made bodies. But I'm just as certain that when they sinned that their unashamed romping was interrupted by sexual neuroses (Genesis 2:25, 3:8-24). I doubt that they celebrated their expulsion from the Garden of Eden with an episode of passionate love-making.

Let's get back to Jeff and Jill's story. We're going to keep it real by letting you listen in on one of our intimate conversations about sexual intimacy.

*"I don't want to make love until we can make it how you like it, with plenty of time for conversation, taking it slow with no possibility of interruptions"*, I said. I was honestly trying to love her by putting her needs ahead of my own, so her refusal of the deal I was offering surprised me, but then again it didn't. We've worked pretty hard at this. Still, what she said marked a significant breakthrough that we've been able to maintain.

*"Ideally I would like to wait, but I'd rather do it now than not at all. The reality is that our schedules the next few days aren't going to cooperate with the ideal. I'd rather we both compromise in order to do something good for our marriage. It is good for us to be intimate. It's important"* Jill said.

Some of you are probably ready to gag? This sounds too good to be true, right; a man willing to delay gratification and a woman urging him to accept her offer to meet his needs?

The key concept to which we have finally submitted after decades of marriage is this, *the oneness of our marriage is more important than either of us as individuals*. In other words, our US is more important than our respective I's (Genesis 2:24).

The context of our conversation was that I was leaving on a business trip for several days, and we hadn't been intimate for several days prior to departure. Time was relatively short and there were still things in the inbox that needed attention. It was decision time. Make time to make love, or be sex camels for a few more days. All things considered, the latter was not only less palatable than the former, but we also knew that making love would be good for our marriage, and so we indulged. The inbox could wait as could the 'ideal' scenario for *fireworks sex* (our term for highly memorable experiences). I wanted to honor her desire for relaxed and lingering intimacy, and she wanted to honor my physiology and to protect our marriage; to send me away with an afterglow of togetherness. "*Let's both give in for the good of our marriage*", she said as she reached to kiss me. I didn't need to be asked twice. The last phrase she spoke before our episode of hot monogamy is etched in my mind as a benchmark protocol not just for sex, but also for other aspects of our relationship. *Let's both give in for the good of our marriage*. That sounds a lot like the principle of mutual submission for marriage, doesn't it?

Ultimately, self must die that US might live. This is not a new idea. The Apostle Paul made this clear for men when he told us to love our wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25). Make sure you know what this means. The Church is the Body of Christ, the people. He suffered and died for people; you and me. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul's instruction to men was to die to our own desires for our wives. By doing this we identify with the suffering of Jesus (Philippians 2:10) who did something that His flesh didn't want to do but that His Spirit agreed to do out of obedience to His Father (Matthew 26:42), and love for the Church (John 15:13). The result of such genuine sacrifice is a Church willing to sacrifice for Him and each other in the same way. In marriage this translates to dying to our desires, for the good of our Bride and our marriage.

Be clear that I am not lauding my behavior in the story above. On the balance sheet of our marriage there are many not so laudable episodes of me pouting about my 'needs' not being met and my failure to consider Jill's needs greater than my own (Philippians 2:3). Also, I'm not saying that I'll be perfect from this day forward. But I will declare with confidence in the Word of God that He has made a way that works, and that the scenario we have shared above can be the rule instead of the exception, and all the more as we truly submit to His life in us and for US.

Jill knows that testosterone is part of God's design in men, and that it drives us CRAZY! I love the way Mark Gungor<sup>1</sup> says it, "*If you knew how CRAZY it makes us, you'd be even more disgusted with us (men) than you already are.*" Yep, it's a tough thing for some women to accept, but talking to us or treating us as if we're hormonal animals is just as damaging to our self-esteem and self-concept as it is to you when we make fun of your 'complexity' and your need to 'have everything just so' to be agreeable for sex. The fact is that He made men to want a lot of it, and made women to be most open to it per lengthy episodes of tender and patient emotional closeness.

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<sup>1</sup> President, Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage, [www.laughyourway.com](http://www.laughyourway.com)

# Grace & Truth

He wants it right away, and she wants to wait until her heart has been held. It's the perfect standoff, until someone gives in, and that's where submission to God's wisdom comes in.

God said that His design of us was good. If we don't like the basic way our anatomy and endocrine system works our argument is with Him, not each other. Our suggestion is to accept it and deal with it in a godly way; both sexes, no exceptions. Deal with the reality of the way we're made, call it good, and look to His Word for instructions on how to make it work. Dying to self that US might live is a good start. Easily said and difficult to do; we get it. Believe us, we get it. We're not pontificating from a position that is insulated from reality. Through twenty-three years of marriage we've had our ebbs and flows, and we'll have more, no doubt. In the future it is unlikely that our drives and desires will go away, and it is as unlikely that both of us will want to participate to the same degree at the same time. Yet rather than waiting till the stars align perfectly, we'll keep working at it, persevering for best rather than settling for mediocre or miserable. We'll work at it by making our desires known to each other and working for compromise when possible and submission when necessary; all for the best of US.

Why are we going to keep working at this? Because, what is best for US is also best for His Kingdom as we experience and model the self-sacrifice of a Groom for his Bride and she shows unconditional respect for her Groom.

The enemy is having a hay day exploiting the loneliness and pent up frustration in Christian men and women. If the Church doesn't seem happy or look like a pleasurable place to be then this might be the reason why. What are you going to do about it?

It is time that the Church puts this issue to bed by getting in bed, one couple at a time. A little bit more hot monogamy might heat up our passion to be the people He made us to be to do the work He made us to do. I know it works for us. We probably have tell-tale grins or radiant glows when we're sexually satisfied. That's probably not a bad witness. "*Hey, what've they got that we don't have?*" goes the hypothetical conversation of curious observers. "*I don't know, but they look like newlyweds that ought to get a room!*"

Yeah! This sounds like a pretty good strategy for evangelism! I hope people will ask why we look so happy. The answer: *We make time to make love!*

*\*\*We know that this is an area of marriage that is extremely difficult for some for very good reasons. This article has not been intended to invalidate legitimate reasons for struggle, or to provide an oversimplified panacea. Rather it was written to inspire hope, and move you to action in faith that God wants you to physically experience through regular physical consummation of your commitment. If God wants to give you a miracle in this area of your marriage would you be willing to receive it? We've seen this happen for couples so we believe He will do it for you if you want it or at least if you are open to growth and change for the good of your marriage, which again, is good for the Kingdom.*

*Jeff and Jill Williams are pioneers of a fresh approach to strengthen and protect marriage; Marriage Coaching. They coach couples locally, nationally and in other countries (distance coaching by phone or Skype), and they train couples to coach other couples through three levels of training. They are available*

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