

SEX RULES!

A photograph of a man and a woman in profile, facing each other and smiling. The man is on the left, wearing a light blue polo shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a white tank top. They are outdoors, with a blurred background of what appears to be a beach or rocky shore. A purple text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

5 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES TO
GUIDE SEXUAL ATTITUDES
AND PRACTICES IN MARRIAGE

CARNELL BORDEN

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By

CARNELL BORDEN

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INTRODUCTION

As a senior pastor of 16 years and in ministry for 27 years, Carnell Borden has repeatedly heard the same questions from Christians regarding sex. This e-book represents principles he has shared with couples over the years to help them apply God's words and will to their sex lives.

Sex Rules! presents those principles in a concise way to assist the reader in considering how God speaks to sexual expression in marriage. It is meant to engage the reader in thought that is scripturally inspired.

Table of Contents

Introduction	ii
Legal Notes	v
Section 1. Sex Is Our Bond!	1
A License to Make Love	1
A Foundation for Marital Intimacy	4
Setting the Record Straight	6
Section 2. Biblical Principles to Guide Our Choices	8
Explicit Biblical Prohibitions	8
If Thy iPhone® Offend Thee...	9
Making Principled Choices	10
The PEARL Principles	11
Principle 1: Purpose	13
Principle 2: Exclusivity	15
Principle 3: Attitude	18
Principle 4: Respect	20
Principle 5: Love	23
Setting the Record Straight	26
Section 3. Making Right Choices	28
Communicating Boundaries	28
Special Considerations	29
A Communication Aid	30
A Decision Guide	32
	iii

Section 4. Special Prayers to Share	34
For Your Marriage	34
For Your Sex Life	35
For Sexual Dysfunction	36
About The Author	38

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SECTION 1. SEX IS OUR BOND!

"And that a man will leave his father and mother, and be forever united to his wife. The two shall become one - no longer two, but one in matrimony! And no man may divorce what God has joined together."-Matthew 19:5, 6 TLB

God designed marriage with two constraints in mind: (1) a commitment between one man and one woman which (2) endures until death parts them.

Scripture instructs that marriage is to be valued and marital sex kept right! (Hebrews 13:4) Consequently, followers of Christ must inform, reinforce and clarify what is *right* sexual behavior. As in all things pertaining to this life, God's own words are the foundation upon which we base our understanding.

In this primer, we do not answer what is right or wrong for you sexually (except where the Bible explicitly does). Rather, we share scriptural principles which guide you to God's truth regarding sexual conduct in your marriage. It is important to know God's heart about this for the preservation of your testimony in Christ and the enhancement of love's expression in your marriage through sexual intimacy.

A LICENSE TO MAKE LOVE

While the Bible isn't an exhaustive legalistic list of sexual *dos* and *don'ts*, it does guide us by revealing God's heart on sex and marriage. Your task is to use biblical precedence and principles to make wise choices in your sex life.

We believe Christians ought to have the best sex of all--creative, exciting, passionate and guilt-free. We believe that sex between a man and a woman in a covenant relationship can be the best sex of all.

The lawful union of a man and a woman is the appropriate satisfaction of God's design for marriage. The legally recognized commingling of assets, the public declaration of love and fidelity and the vow before God and man to obey the Lord's mandates for the relationship are consistent with the earliest marriage. Marriage's original model, as found in Genesis 2:18-24, includes all of these elements and concludes with the *one flesh* declaration which reveals a depth of human relational intimacy that is unique to the marriage bond because it includes physical union.

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Marriage is a God-sanctioned earthly demonstration of Christ's relationship to the Church. For this reason, the enemy of our soul tries to demote and demean marriage. A sign of the times is how society has lessened its view of the importance of marriage. (I Timothy 4:3) We live in an era of constant legislative assaults on marriage, an institution as old as creation and designed by God. But marriage remains important to the strength of any

community as evidenced by the pervasive dysfunctions among communities where marriages are not strong or less existent.

Because there is such an assault on the institution of marriage, as good stewards in Christ, we have to give priority to attending to the strength of our relationships. In particular, sexual intimacy must have proper priority and be viewed as meaningful and beneficial to the bond. Each spouse's body is essentially possessed by the other and should be offered as such within an environment of mutual respect, mutual honor and mutual accountability. (I Corinthians 7:2-4)

² Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

³ Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

⁴ The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

Sexuality is clearly a designed feature of our human experience and meant to be exclusively unique to and enjoyed *within* the marriage relationship while here on earth. (Matthew 22:23-30) Furthermore, couples have a mutual debt that spouses please one another passionately and compassionately, even physically. (Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18, 19)

We are enabled, by God's word and Holy Spirit, to keep a righteous perspective in all areas of our lives and to inform our choices by a Godly standard rather than what merely appears as normal or accepted in the world around us. (Romans 12:2, I Corinthians 6:12) Sexually, our downfalls often arise not from *what* we do as much as from *why* we do it! (Romans 14:23) While, our sexual practices *may be* similar to that of non-Christian married couples, the principles that drive and allow those practices *are* different for us.

Living according to our faith in Christ and understanding of God's will and His design for our relationships is the surest way to avoid sinfulness and personal guilt. True faith in Christ is nourished by God's word. (Romans 10:17) And *that* faith licenses our sexual choices and attitudes so that we might experience fuller and freer intimacy in our marriages. For anything not done in faith is sin. (Roman 14:23)

A FOUNDATION FOR MARITAL INTIMACY

Marriage, at its best, services multiple manifestations of love. There is the love of a friend, of family, of a lover, and God's love. An unreserved expression of each of these lays a foundation for a marriage that is wonderfully resilient, beautifully dynamic, long-lasting and fulfilling.

²¹ Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

In Ephesians chapter 5, scripture is clear that a Godly husband treats and loves his wife as though she is a part of him. He reaps a real benefit when his love is clear and his heart is transparent to her. She is more apt to draw close to him when he honors her by his words and deeds. Authentically intimate experiences are more enabled.

Likewise, a husband is likelier to be transparent and draw close to his wife when she shows him that she has a high opinion of him, prefers him to all other men, values his place in her life, and desires him. The scripture confirms that two, bound in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ, create an indivisible bond. (Ecclesiastes 4:12, Matthew 19:5b)

Now the stage is set for a remarkable love life...for a remarkable life! The mechanics of sex are infused with a depth of purposefulness, proper Godly perspective, priority, and righteous creativity. Remember that the best demonstration of intimate love comes from God himself. *For God so loved the world that He gave...* (John 3:16a). Selflessness is critical to all forms of intimacy.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

A common myth is that Puritan settlers in America disapproved of strong sexual desire, even in marriage.

Hence, one who is seen today as averse to creativity and pleasure in sex, or who views even marital sex as something to be reluctantly tolerated is said to be 'puritanical' in their views.

For Puritans, however, so closely linked were the ideas of marriage and sex that the Puritans usually defined marriage partly in terms of sexual union. William Perkins (clergyman, theologian and foremost leader in the Puritan movement in the Church of England) defined marriage as "the lawful conjunction of the two married persons; that is, of one man and one woman into one flesh."

William Gouge, an influential clergyman and author from this same era wrote that married couples should engage in sex "with good will and delight, willingly, readily, and cheerfully." With 13 children, he certainly seemed to practice what he preached...and wrote!

How's that for being '*Puritanical*'?

SECTION 2. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE OUR CHOICES

Christian Sex Ethics

are the set of Bible-based teachings which are foundational to identifying acceptable sexual practices and attitudes towards human sex and sexuality.

Christian couples often have questions regarding Christian sex ethics. In particular, many are interested in how to determine what

sexual behaviors or activities are *permitted* or *prohibited* for them. We are careful not to teach what we do not know or lead where we cannot go. We don't offer our preferences and inclinations as *truth*. We are not giving you a list of *dos* and *don'ts* beyond what we believe scripture explicitly permits or prohibits. We are sharing Biblical principles that enable you to make wise choices for sexual intimacy in your marriage, and to establish a foundation by which to continually make those choices.

EXPLICIT BIBLICAL PROHIBITIONS

Again, we restrict ourselves to that which scripture prohibits. Consistent with that position, we provide the following references as evidence of sexual activities/areas Christians **MUST** avoid. We believe that these activities are explicitly off limits to us.

Fornication. Sex while single (includes engaged individuals): (Galatians 5:19, 1 Corinthians 7:2 & 36)

Adultery. Sex with someone other than your spouse (spouse swapping, swinging, orgies, threesomes, and all sex with those other than your spouse are examples of such): (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:27)

Homosexuality. Sexual intimacy with same gender: (Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26, 27)

Prostitution. Any form of payment for any forms of sexual interaction including virtual, computer-aided or telephonic: (Deuteronomy 23:17, Proverbs 23:27, I Corinthians 6:15, 16)

Incest. Sex among relatives. (Leviticus 18:6, I Corinthians 5:1-5)

Pornography. Visual, literary and audio media depicting sexual behavior to produce excitement or arousal. (Psalm 101:3, Ezekiel 20:30, Matthew 5:28, 6:23-24, I John 2:15-17)

IF THY IPHONE® OFFEND THEE...

We have technology tools available to us today which give us extraordinary access, help us accomplish tasks in ways scarcely imagined by previous generations. Those same tools can be our downfall or distract us to sin. A case in point: The World Wide Web!

The prohibitions named previously are marketed aggressively on the internet.

With great persistence and cunning, the enemy of our soul seeks to separate all that is Godly from us and assaults us on every front, including in the world of virtual reality. Chat rooms, discussion forums, free images and videos, pay for viewing sites and more are available to those who dare not seek out real life sexual trysts but gladly do so in the anonymous virtual world.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Prohibited sexual acts are as offensive to God in the virtual world of the internet as they are in the actual world. Beware. Sins of the mind...are still sins! (Matthew 5:27-29) Repent and be made whole. (Proverbs 14:12, James 1:14-15, Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-24, Acts 17:30, II Timothy 2:19, Acts 3:19, Hebrews 12:2a)

Making Principled Choices

The Bible is not a sex manual for Believers. The absence of specific references to various sex acts as

well as the presence of broad spiritual principles applicable to sex suggests to us that God believes His Spirit of Grace sufficient to guide us to what is acceptable in His sight and best for us as married couples. (II Corinthians 3:6)

We have questions concerning many activities and behaviors that don't categorize discretely under the explicit prohibitions.

How then do we know what choices are right?

We believe there are 5 principles to help guide our choices in accord with our faith in Jesus Christ.

THE PEARL PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Purpose. Sexual activities and behaviors mustn't regularly take away from the ultimate and natural end of the couple's sexual experience, genital union.

Principle 2: Exclusivity. Sexual intimate experiences are exclusively between one man and one woman in the context of marriage.

Principle 3: Attitude. Sexual activities and behaviors must support a husband and wife's exclusive focus on and preference for one another.

Principle 4: Respect. Sexual intimacy is a collaboration of efforts and requires mutual respect,

agreement and sacrifice for maximum fulfillment of each spouse.

Principle 5: Love. Sexual activity and behaviors must be born of love and, accordingly, must not intentionally inflict pain nor demean either spouse physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

With the application of these principles, we have Bible-based standards by which we may judge whether our sexual choices are right-hearted, right-minded, and right with God.

PRINCIPLE 1: PURPOSE

Sexual activities and behaviors mustn't take away from the ultimate and natural end of the couple's sexual experience, genital union. Couples must not be 'enslaved' to sexual acts that provide manual genital stimulation without genital union. Emotional and spiritual connection is a direct product of intercourse in God's design. Orgasm is but one element in a quality intimate physical union. The pleasure and climax experiences of sex must be accompanied by the unifying value...two becoming one on all possible levels of human interaction.

God's intention for human sexuality is crystal clear. The apparent complementary interlocking nature of the male and female genitalia is primary evidence of what's supposed to happen during sex. Genital union is the event that marks two becoming one. While we may find spiritual, emotional and/or mental application for the oneness of which Genesis speaks, genital union is the express and literal achievement of it.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the danger with using devices, mutual masturbation or other sexual activities that arouse or bring us to orgasm is not inherent to those acts. Rather, it is in any inclination to ultimately and/or routinely deny our spouse and ourselves of the highest expression of God's desire for us. Sex is not why marriage exists. However,

genital union in marriage exists as a God instituted expression of marriage's purpose: to demonstrate to us the oneness that Christ has with His body of believers...the Church!

We must be careful to balance the pleasure of sex with the divine purposes of sex and to experience intimacy in ways that glorify our God while edifying our marriages. Sexual compulsion must not replace relationship completion brought about, in part, by healthy sexual fulfillment. Passion without purpose is poison.

I Corinthians 6 (KJV)

¹² All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

PRINCIPLE 2: EXCLUSIVITY

It's just the two of you. From Genesis forward, it is clear that the 'one flesh' principle translates into the exclusive union of one man and one woman in matrimony. Adam recognizes that God has honored him with a special relationship that includes a unique form of intimacy.

When asked about the lawfulness of divorce, Jesus reaffirms the exclusivity of marriage strongly. He quotes Genesis 2:24. Christ is endorsing the fundamental idea that the union of marriage is defined by the exclusive and publicly recognized bond between one man and one woman for one of their lifetimes.

²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The Bible's explicit teachings on adultery, fornication, lust, and covetousness prohibit such actions as orgies, spouse swapping, threesomes and any activity that places someone else in a married couple's presence during sexual intimacy.

In our age, this principle would exclude us from using the virtual window of the internet to peer into the sex lives of others or share ours with them. Beyond pornography, the World Wide Web is a place of vast

video voyeurism where individuals exchange sexually explicit photographic or video images, watch or view others, and interact through chat rooms and discussion forums as means to stoke and host active sexual fantasies which promote imagined scenarios inclusive of others. While couples rationalize this video voyeurism, it is nothing more than peeking through a technologically created window into the bedroom of others doing things that are meant to be privately 'experienced' by a husband and wife. The sacredness and privacy of that physical union must be respected. (Hebrews 3:14)

Matthew Chapter 5 (KJV)

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

It is imperative that couples avoid the inclusion of a fantasy life which imagines sexual interaction with others, regardless of whether you've agreed to share such fantasies. Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 5:27-29 that this fantasizing realizes sin in our life that is as existent as having actually performed the extramarital acts we've imagined. The harm done to the

sacredness of the marriage may go unnoticed for some time. Eventually, the little foxes such mental activities produce will undermine the strength of our union and expose us to relationship failures. (Song 2:15) We must be careful to pay our sexual attentions exclusively to our mates. (Song 7:10)

PRINCIPLE 3: ATTITUDE

Sexual activities and behaviors must support a husband and wife's focus *on* and preference *for* one another. The act of sexual intimacy should draw you closer to one another. Intimacy means closeness. Activities that take our attentions or imaginations away from one another run counter to God's will for oneness on every level.

When we reach a season in our marriages when our spouses no longer trigger sexual desire in us, we face the challenge of guarding a Godly attitude toward sex. While some may look for external stimulation to 'rekindle' romance or 'add spice', *doing so as a means to develop desire is dangerous*. This is not to suggest that specific products or resources to educate ourselves about our sexuality are inappropriate. However, the wisdom of Proverbs 5 calls on us to focus on one another as objects of desire. Our sexual response cycle (which begins with desire) should be sparked by thoughts and visions of our mates.

¹⁵ Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

¹⁶ Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

¹⁷ Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.

18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.

We guard our hearts and minds with the resolve that our spouse is all we really need for ultimate sexual fulfillment. Concentrating on external things to consistently bring ourselves pleasure or to 'get us in the mood' is selfish and dangerous. This kind of focus threatens to cool our hearts to our spouses.

Conversely, focusing on our husband or wife engenders thoughts of how special they are to our lives, what great gifts they bring to us and what measures of joy we can give to them.

Fetish behavior is the obsessive reliance on sexual arousal from a thing or situation. This runs counter to the idea of being aroused by one's spouse.

PRINCIPLE 4: RESPECT

Sexual intimacy is a collaboration of efforts and requires mutual respect, agreement and sacrifice for the best fulfillment of each spouse. There must be agreement on the frequency and type of extra-sexual or foreplay activities you share. We must be careful to honor our spouse in both what we do and what we *don't* do.

Couples often encounter growing resentment over unresolved disagreements concerning certain sexual preferences or desired activities. One spouse may really want to include oral sex as a form of foreplay and the other may reject that choice. In other cases, one spouse may give oral sex eagerly and frequently while the other gives it infrequently or reluctantly. In both scenarios, a lack of clear and compassionate communication, ill-informed perceptions and an undisciplined approach to interacting sexually feed into negative sexual friction, a diminished mutual respect and a compromised sense of emotional security by the spouse who feels deprived, ignored or imposed upon.

It is important we know the duty we have to one another to neither force our sexual will on each other *nor* are we to unduly deprive our spouse of the pleasure our body may bring to them. We collaborate and communicate to affect mutual satisfaction.

I Corinthians Chapter 7 (KJV)

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

I Corinthians 7:1-5 exists to reinforce the idea that we are to 'sacrifice' our bodies to our spouses in sexual union. We must do it regularly, willingly, and freely. The passage reveals a few things to us.

We know from this passage that good sex helps us discipline our flesh. (Vs. 2) We learn that sex is a responsibility we have to one another. (Vs. 3) This doesn't mean it is a chore. However, it is also not an option or perk. Sex is a necessary feature of the marital relationship. Each spouse's body is a vessel to be honorably and exclusively used by the other for their gratification and the marriage's stability. (Vs. 4) As such, we must give ourselves to one another being mindful of the possibility of withholding access to our

bodies to become a stumbling block for our spouse!
(Vs. 5)

When tempted to reject our spouse's request to engage in a particular act, we should consider the sacrificial nature of our body as a gift. At minimum, discuss what beliefs, experience, or feelings prompt the refusal. It is equally important to acknowledge the need to be considerate when making our requests and to respect our spouse's responses.

PRINCIPLE 5: LOVE

Sexual activity and behaviors must be born of love and, thus, must not intentionally inflict pain nor demean either spouse physically, emotionally, or spiritually. The idea of self-love, as taught by Paul, compels us to treat our spouse's body in nurturing and nourishing ways.

In Ephesians 5, Paul skillfully outlines the behavior of spouses. He speaks of the great *love* and *respect* that is exchanged. The incredible truth he reveals is that marriage is an institutional model intended to be a visual depiction of the relationship between Christ and His Church. As such, the relationships we nurture in our marriages are outward demonstrations of the divine love, care, support, comfort and intimate interaction shared by Christ and the Church.

The apostle makes the very important point that a wholehearted man loves his wife at least as much as himself. In so doing, he is as likely to want to intentionally inflict pain on her as he is on himself. She, being likeminded, holds her husband in high regard. She is loathed to discomfort him. Both spouses, at their best, are committed to acts and thoughts that promote each other's pleasure--considering themselves only secondarily.

Ephesians Chapter 5 (KJV)

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

The desire to inflict or receive pain cannot serve the interests of love and respect which. The diminishing of our spouse for our or their sexual gratification works against the higher function of intimacy which is to glorify God through modelling His grace in human relationships. Ephesians 5 begins by calling us to be imitators of God, relationally. Who can make the case that God inflicts pain for pleasure?

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

The church has struggled to address human sexuality in an objective, scripturally based way for centuries. An early influence is one of our greatest theologians, the 4th century Bishop, Augustine.

In one of his sermon texts (discovered in the 1990's), Augustine wrote that the spouse who engaged in sex out of the duty of fidelity should be regarded as actually possessing the virtue of self-control, even though he or she consented to engage in sexual activity.

"What if you no longer demand, but only pay the debt?" he writes. "It is still attributed to you as self-control. For it is not being demanded out of lust, but it is being paid out of mercy. So, you should say to your God: 'Lord, you know what gift you have placed in me [namely the gift of self-control]; but I also hear what you have advised [namely, the Apostle Paul's advice to "come together again"], because you have made both me and my partner, and have not wished either of us to perish"

Augustine, consistent with many theologians of his time, saw sex as a necessary evil...but an evil no less. He teaches that sexual union has a purpose but must be divorced from enthusiasm. Perhaps his views were influenced by his early life experiences wherein he kept mistresses and had children out of wedlock before his conversion and vow of celibacy.

Yet, he would argue in his time that prostitution was also a necessary evil to moderate social lusts.

For many Christians, sex ethics are informed by undisclosed or unconscious extra-biblical sources. Consequently, some sexual acts or behaviors are believed inherently evil which may not be. Yet others are believed acceptable which may not be. Once we commit ourselves to scriptural tests for God's heart regarding sexual intimacy, we become both convicted of its vices and convinced of its virtues. We are clearer as to what to celebrate *in* and to eliminate *from* our sex lives.

SECTION 3. MAKING RIGHT CHOICES

COMMUNICATING BOUNDARIES

Husbands and wives must agree on rules and boundaries for sexual activities in their marriage. It is ultimately destructive to guilt or coerce your spouse into any activities to which they are opposed or that cause them discomfort. It is also injurious to the marriage if one spouse repeatedly breaches a communicated barrier. Disregarding one another's values or beliefs is a sign of diminished respect. The integrity of the relationship is compromised and trust is degraded.

Communication and trust are keystones of marriage as well as healthy and fulfilling sexual intimacy. Sexual experiences tend to be rewarding when each spouse is selfless and transparent. Thus, activities should not be simply dismissed from your sexual repertoire because of fear. In the same manner that we educate ourselves about parenting and other areas of our lives, we should educate ourselves on issues of sex. Each lover must proactively seek to please the other in what is done and *not* done. In so doing, we are closer to realizing mutually fulfilling sexual intimacy.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the final analysis, no human effort, no matter how great or personally satisfying, can remedy the smallest spiritual deficit. It is an attractive option to some to deal with issues of relational inadequacy, failure or even struggle by pursuing physical pleasure. We are able to easily identify this is the case when we begin to rationalize or justify sin (that which is offensive to God). Romans 14:23 is clear: ALL things not done in faith are sin! If you feel guilty about a particular sexual act, pray. Seek God. Get spiritual guidance from others and find resolution with the Lord before proceeding.

Though our principles serve us well, we are ever aware that we live our lives led by God's very real presence—the Holy Spirit. We prayerfully acknowledge Him in every choice to ensure our continued uprightness before Him. (Proverbs 3:5, 6)

A COMMUNICATION AID

Complete this survey with your spouse. This may help you establish boundaries and opportunities during intimacy. This should be completed in a room other than the bedroom, without distractions, and honestly for it to have value. It should be completed separately and answers compared only after each spouse has completed ALL responses.

Write the appropriate letter response on the line provided.

- A.) Permitted and am interested
- B.) Prohibited
- C.) Permitted but am not interested
- D.) Unclear to me whether permitted or prohibited.

1. Oral Sex _____
2. Anal Sex _____
3. 'Dirty' Talk _____
4. Light Spanking _____
5. Recording Our Sex _____
6. Taking Pictures of each other naked _____
7. Using Vibrators, Bullets, Eggs _____
8. Using Dildo _____

- 9. Using Penis Ring _____
- 10. Using Masturbators (male sex aids) _____
- 11. Forms of Anal Play (Beads, Licking, etc.) _____
- 12. Light Bondage (binding hands or feet) _____
- 13. Sexy Lingerie (crotchless panties, etc.) _____

[If you answer D, see the following A Decision Guide tool.]

Feel free to ask *why* and to discuss your answers. Keep in mind that each of you should hold the other's preferences in high regard and look to please each other selflessly. Do not guilt the other into doing something they are not willing to do. Be open to trying new experiences within the bounds of Biblical guidelines.

A DECISION GUIDE

As a means of aiding your agreement on what is ethically (spiritually) acceptable for your marriage bed, we provide the following template.

Complete as follows for each sex act you wish to consider:

1. Fill in the Sexual Act (oral sex, anal sex, spanking, etc.).
2. Fill in the blank for each of the 5 statements for the Sexual Act.
3. Read each statement aloud together.
4. Each spouse should declare whether the statement is true or not.
5. If the statement is true, the conclusion is *ONLY* that there may not be an *explicit* Biblical prohibition. Please see Special Considerations on page 33 before proceeding.
6. If either partner sees any statement as false, it may indicate a Biblical principle may be involved and further discussion needs to be had. Do consider seeking guidance from your pastoral staff, small group marriage leaders, or a Christian counselor if you reach an impasse. Also, use the opportunity to pray together for direction. Even a disagreement among believers can produce emotional and spiritual intimacy.

Sexual Act:

Guidelines:

1. _____
includes just the two of us. The act does not require another (others) to be present in reality, virtually or mentally.
2. _____
has my spouse's agreement and my spouse does not feel disrespected or dishonored by it.
3. _____
causes no intentional pain and is not demeaning to my spouse. The act will not result in discomforting my spouse as a means of producing pleasure.
4. _____
allows me to mentally focus on my spouse and our relationship. The act does not interfere, replace or distract from my focusing on my love for and commitment to my spouse.
5. _____
does not consistently replace genital intercourse (union). I don't have to do this to enjoy being intimate with my spouse.

SECTION 4. SPECIAL PRAYERS TO SHARE

FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

(Pray this together.)

Father, we thank You for Your great love toward us. Your loving care is the model for our marriage. We recognize how giving and forgiving You are as we work to be giving and forgiving in our home.

Lord, we confess that we are not always successful in modeling Your goodness to one another. We ask for and accept Your forgiveness where we fail. We commit to having our faith increased in this area and to look for opportunities to demonstrate love toward each other as a married couple. We thank You for the gift we have in one another. We pray You give us greater patience and grace that we might continue to selflessly serve one another, uplift one another, and enjoy one another. Daily refresh the love we share for one another and gently remind us of what gifts we are to each other.

Please help us to know how to “write our sorrows in sand and our victories in stone.” Teach us how to grow together. Teach us how to love one another selflessly.

Thank you Lord for all that You are to us. Thank You for what You do for us. We want to live our lives so that You get the glory. Be our strength and guide.

We offer this prayer by the authority granted us through Jesus Christ, our Savior, our Lord. Amen.

FOR YOUR SEX LIFE

(Pray this together.)

Father, we thank You for Your great love toward us. Your loving care is the model for our marriage. We recognize how giving and forgiving You are as we work to be giving and forgiving in our home. We honor and adore You.

Father, we confess that our sexual choices may not have always been pleasing to You. For acts and attitudes that have offended You, we ask for and receive Your forgiveness. We thank You for Your grace in our lives and the power You grant us to maintain a marriage that is pleasing to You. We commit to having our faith increased in these areas and to better inform our choices presently and in the future. We pray Your guidance in keeping our marriage bed pure.

As we are finding spiritual intimacy with You, dear Lord, we desire to pursue greater intimacy with one another in all aspects. We accept that sexual intimacy

is a gift from You to our marriage. We want to make the best use of that gift as we look to serve one another selflessly, skillfully and regularly. We want our bodies to be instruments of pleasure for each other's enjoyment. We desire our sexual union to be whole and pure. We desire to experience the pleasure that sex brings. We desire to experience the purpose for which you designed sex. Guide us, please Lord, as we pursue oneness. Move on our hearts to refresh love and desire for one another.

Thank you Lord for all that You are to us. Thank You for what You do for us. We want to live our lives so that You receive the glory. Be our strength and guide.

We offer this prayer by the authority granted us through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen

FOR SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION

(Pray this together.)

Father, we thank You for Your great love toward us. Your loving care is the model for our marriage. We recognize how giving and forgiving You are as we work to be giving and forgiving in our home. We believe that Your favor and kindness toward us enables our marriage to persevere.

Lord, we confess that we have not always expressed dependence on You or looked to You for guidance. We ask for and accept Your forgiveness. We look for opportunities to demonstrate that we depend upon

direction from You and trust Your plan for our marriage.

We know that You are able to deliver us from the current barrier(s) to our being able to experience sexual intimacy to its fullest. *<name the area of dysfunction>* is troublesome to us and we desire that you lead us to the best possible resolution. As we educate ourselves about this condition, please guide us to the right solutions. Please help us process information and seek out proper resources. Ultimately and absolutely, our trust is in You, Lord, for healing in this area.

We also know that You can and will sustain us in this present condition. Help us to show affection, compassion, and attraction to each other in alternate and creative ways as we discover Your will for us during this season of our marriage. We trust You Lord.

Thank you Lord for all that You are to us. Thank You for what You do for us. We want to live such that You get the glory. Be our strength and guide.

We offer this prayer by the authority granted us through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Carnell Borden is a senior pastor of a Southern California Church. He has been in ministry for more than 27 years. He is married to Angela. They have 5 children and one grandchild. He and his wife share in marriage ministry and have touched couples all over the world.

Their unique focus is in the areas of sexual intimacy and financial literacy. Studies consistently show that finances and intimacy are areas where a substantial number of marriages--including among Christians--break down. Many churches are poorly equipped to minister in these areas. Carnell and Angela help couples and local ministries through workshops, seminars, and online small group meetings.

Carnell is also an adjunct business instructor at a local college.

Follow Carnell on Twitter: [@carnebor](https://twitter.com/carnebor).

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