



# Fall 2025 Marriage Study | Week 8

## Sex in Marriage

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### Opening Icebreaker (5 minutes)

#### Prompt:

"What's a funny, non-embarrassing 'missed expectations' moment you and your spouse (or a close friend) can laugh about now?"

#### Leader Notes:

- Keep lighthearted; avoid overly personal or sexual details.
- Transition: *"If small misunderstandings can affect closeness, how much more when the deeper matters of trust, vulnerability, and love are involved? Tonight we'll see how Scripture describes intimacy not just as physical, but as covenantal, vulnerable, and worshipful."*
- Singles present? Shift prompt to "funny mismatched expectations with a roommate or friend."

### 2. Scripture Reflection (15 minutes)

#### Read Genesis 2:24-25 aloud

*"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does "one flesh" suggest about sex in marriage beyond mechanics (covenant union, knowing/being known)?
2. How does "naked and not ashamed" capture the idea of vulnerability made safe by love?
3. Where do you see cultural messages clashing with this vision?

#### Leader Notes:

- Emphasize: this isn't just about physical union, but emotional and spiritual oneness.
- Transition: *"Paul expands on this vision by showing how mutual care reshapes intimacy."*

### **Read 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 aloud**

*"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband... The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband... but the wife does... Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time..."*

### **Discussion Questions:**

4. How does mutual authority challenge both selfishness *and* passivity in the bedroom?
5. What does it look like practically to steward your spouse's body for their good, rather than use their body for your own?
6. How can couples wisely apply "except by agreement for a limited time" in demanding seasons (postpartum, illness, caregiving, travel)?

### **Leader Notes:**

- Guard tone: remind group this is about honoring one another, not airing grievances.
- Transition: *"Scripture also reminds us intimacy is not dirty or disposable – it's a good gift to be received with gratitude."*

### **Read Proverbs 5:18-19 & 1 Timothy 4:4-5 aloud**

*"Rejoice in the wife of your youth... be intoxicated always in her love."  
"Everything created by God is good... if it is received with thanksgiving."*

### **Discussion Questions:**

7. Why is it important to see marital intimacy as a good gift received with thanksgiving (not a necessary evil, not an idol)?
8. What helps you and your spouse cultivate attraction and affection over time (educated desire, not novelty chasing)?

**Optional Activity (2-3 minutes):**

Quietly list 1-2 ways you can “rejoice in” your spouse this week (non-sexual affection, words of honor, fun, service). Share one if appropriate.

**3. Purposeful Intimacy (15 minutes)**

**From the teaching:** Sex in marriage is:

- **Covenantal knowing** – one-flesh union; “naked and not ashamed.”
- **Vulnerability made safe** – mutual authority, stewarding for the other’s good.
- **A thermometer more than a thermostat** – reveals the health of the relationship; trust, tenderness, unity fuel delight.

**Breakout Prompts (men/women or couples):**

- Which idea do you most need to remember this month—covenant knowing, safe vulnerability, or thermometer-not-thermostat—and why?
- Where is trust strong in your marriage right now? Where is it thin? What’s one step toward repair?
- What tends to cool intimacy in your home (resentment, exhaustion, screens, unresolved conflict, mental load)? What would it look like to address the root instead of trying to “spice up” the symptom?
- Each person shares one area of growth to make intimacy safer and sweeter (clearer invitations, kinder refusals, initiating rest, reducing distractions, scheduling connection).

**Leader Notes:**

- Keep discussions practical, not graphic.
- Transition: *“True intimacy doesn’t just happen – it’s shaped by the gospel. Let’s talk about what that looks like in practice.”*

**4. Practicing the Gospel in Intimacy (10 minutes)**

**Prompt:** Gospel-shaped intimacy requires humility, honesty, and mutuality. Two tools from the teaching:

- **ABCD Confession** (Action/Attitude, Biblical language, Cost, Do/repent).
- **Mutual Rhythms** (shared plan for rest, timing, affection, and prayer).

**Pairs (5-6 minutes):**

- When intimacy is tense, do you tend to pressure, withdraw, or negotiate? What would humility look like in the moment?
- Practice a 30-second ABCD confession for something small but real (tone, avoidance, defensiveness, entitlement).
- Sketch a simple rhythm you could try for two weeks:
  - Protect time (earlier evenings, weekly date night, screen curfew).
  - Pause without punishing (short cool-off + reconvene).
  - Daily affection without pressure (note, text, touch, prayer).

**Return to Group (3-4 minutes):**

- Share one small step you'll take this week to increase safety and signal pursuit (non-sexual affection, words of honor, shared rest).

**Leader Notes:**

- Encourage couples to keep confessions small and specific – avoid digging up major wounds here.
- Remind: rhythms are meant to build safety, not add pressure.

**5. Closing Scripture & Prayer (3-5 minutes)**

**Read Song of Songs 8:6-7 aloud**

*"Set me as a seal upon your heart... for love is strong as death... its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot quench love..."*

**Prayer Points:**

- For humble hearts that confess quickly and forgive freely.
- For the Spirit's help to steward one another's bodies with honor and joy.
- For marriages to grow in trust, tenderness, and thanksgiving, displaying Christ's love.

#### **Leader Notes:**

- Suggest couples hold hands while praying if appropriate.
- Close with thanksgiving: *"God, thank You for making intimacy good and holy in marriage."*

#### **Optional Homework (15 minutes for couples this week)**

- **Gratitude & Honor:** Each spouse names two things they're grateful for in the other (character, care), and one way they felt especially seen recently.
- **ABCD Moment:** Share one confession using the ABCD pattern; receive and extend forgiveness.
- **Rhythm Reset:** Agree on one simple two-week rhythm (earlier bedtime twice a week, screen-free last 30 minutes, after-dinner walk, or midweek coffee check-in).
- **Prayer Together:** Pray 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 and Genesis 2:24-25, thanking God for intimacy as a covenant gift.