



Project Five Let's Talk about Sex

This week's project is going to use all the skills you've learned so far. Remember that you and your husband are gifts from God to each other. Remember that the goal of communication isn't to be "right", but to be understood. Remember that you need to arrange for the right time, place, and emotional attitude to have this discussion. Remember to begin with prayer and to use the reflective listening technique to check for understanding, particularly if you don't seem to agree.

Your relationship will only grow if you are honest during this discussion. You will each need to keep in mind that every relationship is in a constant state of growth. As you are moving closer to each other, things that used to seem "great" may seem a bit lacking because you are now on a higher playing field. That is exactly what should happen - the moment you stop growing together is the moment you start growing apart. Just like staying physically fit requires a daily commitment with constant adjustments to your routine, having a healthy relationship requires a daily commitment with constant adjustments.

Before you begin talking about these discussion items, you might take a day, or part of a day, to think through what your actual feelings are in each area. This list isn't all-inclusive; it is simply designed to get you thinking about how to have this discussion. Even after many years of marriage, many couples feel awkward talking about sex. Many more have trouble being honest; especially if there is an area they feel needs some attention. God created sex. He created it to be a beautiful, satisfying experience. He wants us to enjoy the fullness of it; He isn't embarrassed by it, and we shouldn't be either. The only way that you can experience intimacy (into me see) with each other is by being honest and open about your true feelings and experiences.

Discussion: How satisfied are you with these elements of sexuality:

- Feeling accepted and honored during sexual experiences
 - What does your spouse do that particularly makes you feel closer to him/her during the sexual experience?
 - Are you or have you been asked or expected to do anything that makes you feel dishonored?
 - The Bible tells us that once we are married our bodies no longer belong exclusively to ourselves. How can you demonstrate the kind of care for each other during sex that you would have for yourself?
- The overall quality of your relationship
 - How safe do you feel emotionally, spiritually, and physically throughout the day?
 - Do you feel safe enough to be vulnerable?
 - What causes you the most distress when you think about being completely open with each other?
- The level of commitment you feel each person exhibits
 - Do you truly believe that marriage is forever?
 - Do you feel that your spouse puts you above all other people?
 - Are you convinced that your spouse is reserving all aspects of intimacy for you - emotionally, spiritually, and physically?
- The depth of your honesty and intimacy with each other
 - Can you talk to your spouse about anything, or do you feel some areas are “off limits”?
 - Do you feel your thoughts and opinions are taken seriously?
 - What is one thing you would like to experience more deeply with your spouse?
- Your attitude toward sex
 - Do you view sex and being dirty, being a duty, or being desired?
 - What specific things have contributed to your attitude toward sex?
 - What can your spouse do to increase the good and decrease the bad?
 - Are there any “triggers” that start a downward spiral in your enjoyment or attitude toward sex?

- The frequency and variety of sexual experiences you have
 - In reality, how often do you have time for sex? Why that amount?
 - Are you satisfied with that amount or would you like to experience each other more/less?
 - What can be done to accommodate that? Can you think of creative ways to make that time?
 - What about variety? Do you feel stuck in a rut? Do you each initiate or does it fall to just one person?
 - Do you try to wait until you get to bed to start foreplay, or does it start at an emotional/mental level much earlier in the day? Anticipation is a huge part of the experience - how well are you using it?
- The amount of gentleness and tenderness you receive from your spouse
 - Do you feel treasured when you are having sex, or do you feel like you're being used for the other person's pleasure?
 - What can your spouse do to show you that you are a precious gift?
 - Do you feel completely safe - emotionally, spiritually, and physically?
- Understanding each other's likes and dislikes
 - Is there anything you'd like to try (or try again)?
 - Is there anything you feel is just out of the question?
 - How do you communicate your likes and dislikes about touch to your spouse?