

Part 4 - His Needs / Her Needs

TODAY IS DAY TWENTY-FOUR OF THE LOVE DARE!

Let's do a brief review of the principles we have been learning ...

Love is FAITHFUL It is a choice, not a feeling.
 It is an action, not a reaction.
 It can be given even if it is not deserved.
 It can be given even if it is not returned.

Love always protects from PARASITES.

Hidden ADDICTIONS damage healthy AFFECTIONS.

LUST is an attempt to meet legitimate needs in illegitimate ways.

Ephesians 5:28 (NLT) In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man is actually loving himself when he loves his wife.

1 Peter 3:7 (NLT) In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat her with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. If you don't treat her as you should, your prayers will not be heard.

ROMANCE IS THE ART OF STUDYING EACH OTHER FOR THE PURPOSE OF PLEASING EACH OTHER. But too often, we do this in courtship but neglect it after marriage. Remember waffles and spaghetti?

- Romance to a woman is when a man ties all the aspects of her life together.
- Romance to a man is when you have clear, simple expectations and you stick to them.

Just to complicate matters, in addition to the normal Waffle-Spaghetti conflicts, every spouse has their own unique personality! Romance is really just knowing your lover, because different kinds of personalities prefer different kinds of romance. Your mate doesn't necessarily "love to be loved" the way you love to be loved!

The key is to focus on your mate, on complimenting their strengths and encouraging them in their areas of weakness. Realize that no one's spouse is perfect, so don't expect that from your spouse (you don't want them to expect it from you!).

1 Corinthians 7:3 (GN) A man should fulfill his duty as a husband, a wife should fulfill her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs.

Dr. Willard Harley, a marriage counselor from Minnesota, wrote a great book called "HIS NEEDS, HER NEEDS." Throughout the years of his practice, he interviewed thousands of couples and arrived at the top five needs of men and women in a marriage relationship:

FIVE NEEDS OF MEN	FIVE NEEDS OF WOMEN
1. Sexual fulfillment	1. Affection
2. Recreational companionship	2. Conversation
3. An attractive spouse	3. Honesty and openness
4. Domestic support	4. Financial support
5. Admiration	5. Family commitment

Do you see any similarities between these two lists? NO! Is it any wonder we have so much trouble adjusting in marriage? We each try to meet the needs we have in another person, and end up frustrating them because their needs are completely different! The secret to a great marriage is to get serious about learning your spouse's needs and determine that you're going to meet them to the best of your ability, even though they're not the same as your needs!

A person's five basic emotional needs are so demanding that, if any of them go unmet at home, that spouse becomes vulnerable to the temptation of an affair. This is even more likely if someone outside the marriage begins to fulfill the need that is not being met in the marriage.

Because of a lack of understanding, many couples unknowingly work at cross-purposes, each trying to fulfill the needs he or she feels, not the needs their mate feels. For example, wives often easily shower their husbands with affection because they appreciate it and want it so much themselves. On the other hand, husbands smother their wives with sexual advances, because sex is their most pressing need. Each becomes confused when at best their mate responds with only mild pleasure and at worst becomes irritated.

We do not have time to deal with all of these needs, but we will look at the most troublesome one in most marriages: the physical relationship, the conflict between "sex" and "affection." This is the conflict that most often leads to an affair. (We will look at it mostly from the man's perspective – because of the speaker!)

One popular minister recently asked an audience of men what they felt were the three biggest temptations men face today. A man in the first row instantly called out: “#1: Sex! #2: Sex! #3: Sex!” But he was just about right: In a recent survey, Christian men were asked to list the sins they struggled with most. When the results were compiled, sexual immorality of one type or another represented 62% of all the sins listed. The next most frequently named sin only garnered 12%. For men, the problem of sexual immorality is FIVE TIMES greater than the next biggest sin problem. Blatant sexuality in the media, our culture’s permissive attitudes toward nudity and immorality, high stress lifestyles, frequent solo business travel, and easy access to pornography on the internet are just a few factors that contribute to the problem.

VIDEO CLIP: “BREAKING FREE”

Here is the Lord’s primary provision for sexual temptations:

1 Corinthians 7:2-5 (NLT) But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. The husband should not deprive his wife of sexual intimacy, which is her right as a married woman, nor should the wife deprive her husband. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband also gives authority over his body to his wife. So do not deprive each other of sexual relations. The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time, so they can give themselves more completely to prayer. Afterward they should come together again so that Satan won’t be able to tempt them because of their lack of self-control.

1. Due to sexual immorality, each person should MARRY

What would you say is the answer to sexual immorality? To pray? To use self-control? God says to GET MARRIED!

Sexual immoralities are simply the multiple ways you seek to have your sex drive fulfilled; when your sex drive is satisfied, immoralities are relieved. And marriage is God’s plan to provide for our sex drives in a way that pleases Him. Therefore, He considers marriage to be “HOLY.”

2. Married partners are to fulfill their SEXUAL DUTIES

Just MARRIAGE is not the answer to immorality – SEX WITHIN MARRIAGE is the answer! The Bible teaches that marriage is both a delight and a DUTY (a moral obligation).

The DUTY does not belong to the person who INITIATES sex, but to the person who RESPONDS to the advances. Your spouse has a sex drive seeking fulfillment, and it’s YOUR responsibility to make sure their needs are met!

We are also instructed to FULFILL (“completely satisfy”) our sexual duties in marriage. Which of the two partners must be the one to decide if the sexual desires are completely satisfied – the one initiating sex! The “duty of sex” is never for yourself but always for your spouse.

A “scientific survey” was done to discover what days of the week men like to make love. They discovered that men like days that begin with a T ... Tuesday, Thursday, Tonday, Tednesday, Triday, Taturday, Tunday, Today, Tomorrow. We get tongue-tied just “tinking” about it! And that’s great ... if men confine their sexual affections to their wife!

Your husband made a commitment to be faithful to you, because he trusted you to be as sexually interested in him as he is in you. Unfortunately, in many marriages the man finds that this is one of the biggest mistakes of his life. He has agreed to limit his sexual experience to a wife who is unwilling to meet that vital need. He is up the proverbial creek without a paddle! Don’t withhold from your partner the only acceptable means of fulfilling their sexual needs!

When you get married, God sovereignly takes something away from you and gives it as a heavenly wedding present to your spouse – the authority you had over your own body. Your spouse shouldn’t have to beg for your body!

Success in marriage is always the result of following the clear teachings of the Bible! The Bible teaches: (1) that sex is not dirty or sinful, (2) that it is given for pleasure and not just to produce children, (3) that it is not to be used as a reward or a punishment, and (4) that it is not an optional part of marriage depending on one’s moods or preferences.

3. God commands you to stop depriving each other of SEX

Imagine this: A man arrives home from work and announces, “Wow, am I hungry!” The wife says, “What are you talking about? I made you breakfast and you ate it, then you went out for lunch and you ate again. Now you want me to make dinner for you. What are you, some kind of glutton? And besides that, you’re always thinking of yourself. Your hunger, your timetable. You are so selfish!”

No one would call your God-given desire for food at meal times selfish, would they? So why would any wife call her husband's God-given desire for sex selfish? The only reason there is so much confusion about the sex drive and none about the food drive is that the food drive can be fulfilled without anyone else's participation. The sex drive, on the other hand, requires the active participation of another person every single time it is to be fulfilled according to God's Word. Also, the food drive is roughly the same for everyone, but the sex drive has been placed into most men at a much higher frequency than women.

Biblically, you may only "deprive each other" of sex under four conditions: (1) when you both agree, (2) when it is for a limited time, (3) when you are temporarily devoting yourself more fully to prayer, (4) when you agree to come together again soon. Sexual intimacy is to be the NORM, never the EXCEPTION in a marriage.

If you do deprive each other, the Bible warns that you open yourself (and your marriage) to an attack of Satan in sexual areas because of your lack of self-control. Continued postponement or withholding of sexual relations within marriage places VERY REAL and VERY UNNECESSARY pressure on your mate.

A WORD TO MEN: The typical husband doesn't understand his wife's need for affection any more than the typical wife understands her husband's deep need for sex. But, when it comes to sex and affection, you can't have one without the other.

AFFECTION IS THE ENVIRONMENT, SEX IS THE EVENT. Husbands, you need to meet your spouse's needs for affection as you want them to meet your needs for sex!

Men and women approach sex differently, and there is nothing you can do to change that.

- Most men would like their wives to be more aggressive in their intimate encounters.
- Most women would like their husbands to slow down and be more understanding of their emotional needs.

This tension exists because men and women have been wired differently by their Creator in the realm of sexual pleasure.

The wife's sexual fulfillment is connected to everything else in her life; when she feels close to her husband emotionally she is more responsive to him. When he is supportive of her, she finds him more irresistible. The more he is part of her life, the stronger her desire is for him.

HOW TO IMPRESS A WOMAN: compliment her, cuddle her, kiss her, caress her, love her, stroke her, tease her, comfort her, protect her, hug her, hold her, spend money on her, dine her, buy things for her, listen to her, care for her, stand by her, support her, go to the ends of the earth for her.

HOW TO IMPRESS A MAN: show up naked.

Sex is a different pursuit for men than women because of the way they are created. The simplest way to understand a man's sex drive is to picture it as the center box of his waffle. This box is bigger than any of the others and can be entered from any other box. This intense ability of a man to notice women was given to him so his wife would be attractive to him all the days of his life, but it has been terribly exploited. As a man sees more and more artificial beauty, he may lose his appreciation for the natural beauty of his wife (in all the stages of life) if he is not careful. Any man who wants to have a lifelong relationship of pleasure with his wife must discipline his eyes to stay focused on her.

VIDEO CLIP: "DISTORTION OF BEAUTY"

Job 31:1 (NIV) I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.

A growing relationship with your spouse will reduce the pull and attraction of pornography and adultery. The phrase "[he] knew his wife" is a Biblical euphemism for sexual intercourse (Genesis 4:1). A similar concept is found in the phrase "one flesh" (Matthew 19:6). For sex to be all God intended it to be, it must occur in a marriage relationship based on mutual devotion, respect, communication and absolute loyalty.

1 Corinthians 7:3 (JB) The husband must give his wife what she has the right to expect, and so too the wife to the husband.

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how successful have you been in the battle against "parasites" (addictions) that threaten your marriage? _____

THE LOVE DARE CHALLENGE:

End it now. Identify every object of lust in your life and remove it. Single out every lie you've swallowed in pursuing forbidden pleasure and reject it. Don't allow lust to live in a secret corner of your heart. Kill it today!

Now, commit to implementing it this week in a practical way!

TOMORROW IN THE LOVE DARE: "LOVE FORGIVES"