

# To the Bride and Groom

Thoughts and Suggestions that can help you live your lives together “To the praise of His glory” because you have “first trusted in Christ” (Eph. 1:12)

To give and receive all that God intended in your marriage read together, read repeatedly, and discuss openly with each other.

Congratulations! The two of you have made life’s second most important decision – the choice of a life’s partner. The most important decision, which you should have already made, is to accept Jesus Christ

as your Savior. I consider it a privilege and a blessing to have a part with you in your marriage. By the time you receive this, we will have visited together, and I will have gone over many of the thoughts and suggestions that you will find in this booklet.

I feel that it is as important to be the husband and wife you should be to each other as it is to pick the right person to be your husband or wife. The happiness and blessings you will receive in your marriage relationship will be in direct proportion to the commitment and success you each have to be what the other needs as you go through life together.

The suggestions below are based on God’s word, the Bible, knowledge I have gained through secular sources, things I have learned from others who have shared their lives with me as a minister, and my own experiences in marriage. The secret to success put very simply and broadly, is: “... Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, kindness, self-control: against such there is no law. (Gal. 5:16 & 22 – 23) Or to put it another way, be nice to each other all the time.

However, let me give you some specific suggestions that may make the process of learning to be a help fitting for your husband or how to live with your wife with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, easier to understand. This is the most important knowledge you can gain, because God says you are heirs together of the grace of life.

## 1. LEAVE FATHER AND MOTHER:

Eph. 5:31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

You are starting a new family circle. You must separate from the one to develop the other. From this point on in your lives, your first loyalty and your commitment are to be to each other – not your parents. If they are there as a source of encouragement, this is a real blessing. If, on the other hand, they try to control, criticize, or put down your spouse, you must remember where your first loyalty is. Under God, it is to your spouse. A wife should never tolerate a parent putting down her husband or trying to convince her that she should not do what he wants her to do. At the same time, a husband should never allow his parents to criticize or put down his wife. If observations are made that are accurate, a husband should evaluate them and implement them as his own observations, not those of his parents.

2. TAKE TIME TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER: (Limit assembly and social contact.) Deu. 24:5 When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken. I Pet. 3:7 Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. In the combination of assembly activities and family activities, work and hobbies, it is possible for a couple to become too involved with others and fail to really get to know each other. During courtship, a couple generally is always looking for more time to be alone to talk and visit with each other. This should not stop with marriage. There are many adjustments that both must make. There will be many questions to discuss. A husband should be conscious of the fact that, in most cases, the wife is making more adjustments than he is. Your wife will need your consideration, communication, direction, and approval. This requires time alone – together. Too many good activities such as sings, meetings, hospitality, visiting others, helping others, work, etc., etc., may prevent you from really getting to know each other—focus. In most cases, the husband will need to go to work, leaving his wife at home alone right after the honeymoon. However, to the degree that he can eliminate overtime and not spending unnecessary time away from home, the better it will be. The wife needs to feel important and secure. In many cases, a new wife will have some unrealistic ideas of her husband's only interest being her and she being the total focus of his life. This won't be practical, but, as much as possible, a husband should try to be there for his wife.

You will have the rest of your lives to be hospitable, to visit others, and to be a part of others' lives. This is the time to get your marriage relationship on a solid footing. In most cases, you will not be able to do this without spending time alone together. The Lord realized the importance of this as indicated by the passage in Deuteronomy 24:5. It seems the primary thought was that the husband be able to spend enough time with his wife to increase the possibility of a child being born to him before going to war. However, then, as well as now, there were benefits in husband and wife having time alone together to solidify their relationship.

### 3. DON'T GO INTO DEBT FOR DEPRECIABLE ITEMS:

Ro. 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. (Not a prohibition against credit – but a prohibition against too much credit, making it impossible to meet obligations in a timely way.) Pro. 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. (Who is going to rule over you?) The two issues that are said to cause the most trouble in marriages are sex and money. Problems over money are generally created by the unwise use of money (spending) rather than a limited amount of income. In my judgment, a young couple should make it a practice to estimate their income and expenses before marriage and work up a budget to control their spending. After marriage, they should keep track of where all the money goes. After a few weeks, they may realize where they need to change their budget. A budget can be adjusted any time the needs or goals change. Unnecessarily going into debt will put strain on the financial situation like very few things can. Whatever you buy on credit will cost you considerably more than if you saved the money and bought it with cash.

A couple may mistakenly think they need the newest and latest of gadgets to set up housekeeping, but they do not. A couple may think they need the finest of clothes and the nicest of cars, but they do not. It is better for a husband and wife to have time together than for a wife to sit at home alone surrounded by many purchases, while her husband works a second job to make the payments. Also, it is the wife's place to be a homemaker, not the extra income earner, so they can have more nice things.

We live in a time when many couples feel that they cannot live on the husband's income. However, this is generally because they spend too much for things they really do not need. The credit card makes this sooooo easy to do. The credit card also makes it sooooo hard to pay back. There is a lot of wisdom in the old saying, "Pay as you go – and if you can't pay – don't go."

My advice is, don't go into debt for depreciable items, if it is at all possible. Large purchases, necessary transportation, medical bills, etc., sometimes require borrowing. Housing is not a depreciable item. If you must borrow money, shop for the best interest rate, and, generally, it is not found from credit card companies.

4. READ GOD'S WORD (The Bible) AND PRAY TOGETHER IN A MEANINGFUL WAY: Mt. 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Eph. 5:26 – 27 That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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.

Col. 3:15 – 17 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

Ph. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

When I speak of praying together in a meaningful way, I am not talking about formal prayers. Generally, when we pray at the dinner table, we develop a pattern. At these times we do not express the desires, fears, and needs that are really close to us. For a couple to develop the ability to pray out loud in the presence of each other about the things that are really important to them, that will go a long way toward them being able to communicate openly and meaningfully in all areas of life.

Also, to be able to read and talk about God's word, our feelings about God, our fears, etc., this will go a long way toward building a bond between two people. The two most difficult areas for people to communicate openly relate to our relationship with and feelings toward God and our sexuality. However, as you begin your life together develop openness in all areas of life as much as possible.

5. COMMUNICATE – COMMUNICATE – COMMUNICATE:

Col. 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter toward them.

Pro. 16: 21 The wise in heart will be called prudent; and sweetness of the lips increases learning.

Pro. 31:26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.

Two important factors in developing the ability in another to communicate effectively and meaningfully with you are:

a) How you hear – and

b) How you react to what you hear.

If you belittle, become angry, and condemn, you will only cause the other person to stop expressing themselves openly. This will be true especially in areas that are important to them, or areas they are sensitive about. Develop the ability to communicate your likes and dislikes, particularly relevant to sex and other areas you are sensitive about. Be sure the communication is done with kindness and tact.

Remember; be nice to each other all the time. There is a truth found in the book of Proverbs that we often forget, The wise in heart will be called prudent, and sweetness of the lips increases learning. (Pro. 16:21) Remember, sweet lips all the time.

There are those who have developed the ability to talk about unimportant things to keep from really communicating. This is a bad habit that we sometimes see children demonstrate when caught with their hands in the cookie jar. They want to talk about the weather, a pretty flower, or anything but the cookie jar. If you have this habit, break it by forcing yourself to talk about what is important. If you haven't developed the habit of talking about unimportant things to avoid talking about what is really important to you or your spouse don't develop it.

## 6. SETTLE DISPUTES QUICKLY:

Eph. 4:3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Col. 3:13 Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Pro. 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

The time will come when you have disagreements. It is important to remember during those times that you are both on the same side. In most cases, the issue is not worth destroying the relationship over. However, the husband cannot give up his headship just to make peace or to maintain the relationship. It is the one who is the helper comparable to the man who is to submit peaceably, in order to maintain a peaceful relationship when there is a disagreement over what to do or not do that cannot be resolved by discussing the issues.

The husband has the privilege of loving his wife as Christ loved the church. Therefore, he will consider his wife's desires, insights, and preferences whenever he can. This will help her feel nourished and cherished. However, when disagreements come, make it a point not to go to sleep at night with unresolved disagreements between the two of you. It is all right for a husband and wife to have different opinions, judgments, and preferences. However, it is important that if discussion deteriorates into an argument, you make up as soon as possible. Both husband and wife need to feel loved and accepted.

## 7. WALK IN GOD'S ORDER FOR MARRIAGE:

Gen. 3:16 To the woman He said: I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.

Eph. 5:22 – 24 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord...Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Eph. 5:25 – 28 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it...So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

I Cor. 11:3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.

Tit. 2:5 To be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

It is the privilege and place of rest for a wife to submit to her husband in everything. In submitting, the responsibility of being the one who makes the final decision is removed from the wife. The wife is to adapt to her husband and have a commitment to be a helper fitting to her husband. When disagreements arise, the act of submitting to God and His order by submitting to your husband, stops quarrels and fighting – it brings peace and maintains a good relationship. Also, if the decision was a bad one, the wife who submits to her husband's judgment is relieved of the accountability that always comes with authority.

The best kept health and beauty secret is found in 1 Peter 3:3-4 KJV Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek (gentle) and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Many women spend a lot of money for medications that might make them feel better, and for clothes, makeup, and beauty treatments and do not realizing the most beautiful characteristic in a wife is a gentle and quiet spirit. This is in contrast to a domineering, aggressive, controlling spirit. The ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit is valued by God and all thinking husbands. The ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit is the best kept beauty secret of all times and our culture does it's best to keep it hidden. As the years go by, the wrinkles and scars of a frown and feelings and expressions of stress will detract from the natural beauty and physical health of every wife. The husband who has a wife whose beauty is the inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit is certainly blessed of the Lord. However, a husband can do a lot to make it easy for his wife to rest in his judgment and his decisions. If a husband makes his wife feel nourished and cherished, it will be easier for her to be gentle and quiet in her on mind and heart (her thoughts).

If a husband realizes the tremendous challenge of loving his wife as Christ loved the church, he will not lord it over his wife, he will not disregard her insights, and he will not ignore her wants and wishes.

The order for successful family life is the husband who loves his wife as he does himself, a wife who submits to her husband in everything, and children who obey their parents in the Lord. The husband is to be the provider, and the wife is to be the homemaker.

#### 8. MUTUALLY ANSWER THE QUESTION OF FAMILY PLANNING:

It is important for every couple entering into marriage (except in rare cases) to want to bring children into the world and raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I do not understand that to do this requires that a couple want conception to take place:

- As soon as possible – or
- As frequently as possible.

Today, the decision, as to when to start a family and how large a family to have, is a decision that most everyone can make. With this ability comes the necessity to decide how to use this control.

There are many factors that might influence the wishes of the couple such as:

- Age of the couple,
- Health of the couple,
- Financial ability of the couple, and
- Lifestyle of the couple.

Today, in the world in which we live, children are considered by many as an inconvenience. They look at children this way because they do not want to be interfered with in their selfish pursuits of fun and pleasure. Other couples do not want the responsibility of raising children. For a Christian couple this should not be a factor.

The decision regarding how soon to start raising a family and how many children a couple want to have, should be made prayerfully and after considering all of the relevant factors. I do not urge couples to have large families, and I do not encourage small families. It is a fact – God’s word says – Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate. (Psa. 127:4 – 5) It is easy in one’s youth to think there are more important, more fun, and more exciting things to do than raise children. Then in your later years you may come to realize that to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord would have been a better use of our resources. It is important to remember that you are young only once and decisions made when you are young often cannot be altered when you are older. So make this decision soberly and with prayerful, thoughtful, consideration.

#### FROM THE SCRIPTURE I UNDERSTAND:

- a) In this dispensation God is not opening and closing wombs on a regular basis.
- b) On occasions, in the past, God did open and close wombs.
- c) When God opened or closed a womb, it was a miracle, not the norm.

Today, there is a great deal of technology available to:

- a) Promote conception,
- b) Repair birth defects and prolong life in many ways, and
- c) Limit or control conception.

To take advantage of technology in one of these areas is no more “playing God” than to take advantage of the technology in another area. I know of no one who faults others for promoting conception or repairing birth defects. It would be inconsistent to condemn someone for taking advantage of one area of technology if we are not going to reject all technology. With ability comes responsibility. Therefore, we, because of technology, must make hard decisions like when to unplug the respirator, whether to have a certain surgery or not, and when to stop treatment for cancer. With ability comes responsibility in the area of family planning as well as the area of treating illness.

It has been suggested that “natural” birth control (i.e. the “rhythm method”) is acceptable to God and “artificial” methods of birth control are not acceptable to God. It is important to realize that sin is first in the heart (see Matthew 5:28), then we put it into action. If God wants every Christian to have all the children they possibly can, then the sin is first in not wanting all of the children we can have as soon as we can have them – and as close together as we can have them. If we decide that it is OK to not want as many children as we can have – then (from a spiritual stand-point) the method used doesn’t make any difference.

Sin is first in the heart. The sin (if it were sin) would be in not wanting the children. If a couple is going to limit the size of their family, I would think they would use the most effective method available to them with the least amount of side effects.

I will make a brief comment on two methods of birth control that, in my judgment, are not acceptable. For a husband and wife to avoid sex in order to limit the size of a family is condemned by the apostle Paul, I Corinthians 7:1 – 7 Also, I would not recommend the practice of “coitus interruptus” (where the husband pulls back from his wife before he ejaculates) for two reasons: the first being, it is often not successful, the second being the fact that often the wife is left without reaching a climax.

Aside from the two methods referenced above, if I were going to plan the size of my family, I would use the most effective method with what I judged to be the least amount of side effects, consistent with what is esthetically acceptable to me and my wife. For a Christian infanticide and abortion are not methods of birth control for a Christian. They result in taking the life of a person, and therefore I understand them to be in God’s sight murder. However for those

who have practiced such, they like all sin accept the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as one’s personal savior are forgiven by God, and should be by human beings when one is repentant. 1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation (payment) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Because of the death burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ it is true that If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

#### 9. DO NOT DISCUSS YOUR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS:

Husbands generally are not inclined to do this, but sometimes wives do. It is part of the openness that is characteristic of more women than men. Probably it is part of their desire to develop the relationship and feel close to someone.

Your sexual relationship, techniques, and the pleasures it brings to you are:

- a) Special,
- b) Precious, and
- c) Private.

It will do you no good to share with another outside of your marriage what your husband or wife does that excites and thrills you. This might make someone jealous, but that won’t be in their best interest. In addition, you are taking great risk in bringing someone into your personal and private life in a way that is unnecessary.

If you need counsel, seek it from those who are not your peers. Get it from those who have gone through what you working with ahead of you and who you have reason to believe know what they are talking about—because of the success you see in their lives.

#### 10. DISREGARD SEXUAL TABOOS:

I Cor. 7:4 – 5 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does: and, likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Heb. 13:4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Pro. 5:18 – 20 Let your fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured (ravished k.j.) by an immoral woman, and be embraced in the arms of a seductress?

Song of Solomon 1:13 – 17 A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.

My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of Engedi. THE BELOVED Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes. THE SHULAMITE Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also, our bed is green. The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

Song of Solomon 2:6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.

Song of Solomon 2:8 – 9 The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag...

Song of Solomon 4:1 – 4 Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes behind your veil: your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing; every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them. Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely: your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate. Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers...

Son. 4:7 – 11 You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you... You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace. How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices! Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

Song of Solomon 5:9 – 16 What is your beloved more than another beloved... My beloved is white and ruddy, chief among ten thousand. His head is like the finest gold; his locks are wavy and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are like a bed of spices, like banks of scented herbs: his lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh. His hands are rods of gold set with beryl: his body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires. His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold: his countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!

Song of Solomon 7:1 – 10 How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman. Your navel is a rounded goblet which lacks no blended beverage: your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies. Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower, your eyes like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim: your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus. Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; the king is held captive by its tresses. How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights! This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters. I said, I will go up to the palm tree; I will take hold of its branches: let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, And the roof of your mouth like the best wine. The Shulamite The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. Song of Solomon 8:3 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. The scriptures above, contrasted with scriptures that describe the types of sexual relationships God considered to be sin, support the accuracy of the following statement: When it comes to questions that most couples have as to which types of sexual caresses are right and which are wrong in the sight of God, it is important to really believe that between a husband and a wife –

- a) Any form of sexual caress or stimulation,
- b) That is enjoyable to both husband and wife,
- c) Physically harmless to neither husband or wife,
- d) Freely given and/or received (unforced),
- e) Is acceptable to God.

God has designed the human body emotionally and physically to enable us to bring sexual pleasure and arousal in innumerable ways. All types of caresses will not necessarily be equally enjoyable to everyone. However, with experimentation and unselfish consideration for the other, great skill can be developed by both husband and wife in bringing sexual pleasure to each other.

At times the husband will lead, at times the wife will lead, as both of you need to be able to give pleasure to the other as well as receive pleasure from the other. This is consistent with the expression from the apostle Paul, The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And, likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. (I Cor. 7:4)

I have been asked, "What is normal sex?" I have been asked, "How often is it normal for a couple to have sex together?" My response is almost always, "Don't try to figure out what is 'normal' or the 'average' when it comes to expressing your love for each other in sex. You are unique individuals – learn from each other – provide what is needful and desirable for each other – forget what other people do – don't try to figure out what is 'normal'. Each of you is unique and so your marriage is unique. "Satisfy each other."

There are many things throughout a life time that will change the needs and desires of the other. About the time you feel you have it figured out, it will change.

Assume what is satisfactory for individuals in the area of sex may be as different as someone being satisfied with having sex once a year and someone else wanting sex three times a day. As long as two once-a-year people are married to each other, that is fine. As long as two three-times-a-day people are married to each other, that is fine. If a once-a-year person is married to a three-times-a-day person, then both will need to make adjustments to accommodate the other. The caring for the needs of the other in sex, as in all other areas of life, is what love is all about. Love is providing for the needs of the other.

However, often when there is a great disparity between the needs and desires of one partner and the other, the partner with the most desire is not getting the satisfaction and pleasure that God intended they get from sex in marriage. Sometimes there is molestation or abuse in the background of one of the partners that inhibits their desire for sex or their ability to enjoy sex as a gift from God – clean, pure, and wholesome. In the next section I will give some suggestions that should help you both give and receive the pleasure God intended you receive from sex in marriage.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR MUTUALLY SATISFYING SEX IN MARRIAGE:

A major reason for sex in marriage is to enable conception. For this reason, generally the man can reach a climax and ejaculate the sperm that fertilizes the egg and results in conception. A wife's sexual climax with the pleasure and release that God intended that your wife receive is not guaranteed simply because she conceives.

Because of this reality, a husband dwelling with his wife with understanding and loving her as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, will realize the fact that he needs to develop the skill that will enable him to bring to his wife at least the same amount of pleasure he receives. This skill, joyfully and frequently exercised, goes a long way toward helping a wife to feel NOURISHED and CHERISHED rather than used and taken advantage of. Often in the early years of marriage, a husband seems to be interested in sex most of the time.

Sometimes this becomes frightening to a young wife, and she becomes concerned that something is wrong with him. At the same time, unfortunately, the man normally hasn't adequately developed his skill and understanding of sexual techniques to the point that he is bringing the same degree of pleasure to his wife as he is receiving himself. This is unfortunate because, generally, there is nothing wrong with the husband; he is just thrilled with his wife, her beauty, and the pleasure he receives from her.

Also, unfortunately, he doesn't understand what he has not learned in sexual technique and how to create an environment that will enable his wife to "let go" sexually because she has confidence in the fact that he really cherishes her.

To provide this environment requires that a husband have a commitment to do his part in maintaining a loving relationship – ALL DAY LONG – not just at night or when they are having sex. This will require, as mentioned above, that disagreements be settled the night before, not brought over into the next day. His wife must feel loved and accepted because of what he says and what he does.

Leaving for work after thanking your wife for breakfast, giving her a warm kiss and a friendly wave, will help her feel cherished all day long. A call from work just to say, "How you doing – I love you," will keep the feeling of being cherished going throughout the day. To come home and greet her with a warm kiss and a hug and whatever develops from there, will help her be able to trust, let go, and receive the pleasure he can give her in sex. Good sex for a wife generally requires that she feel loved all day long, i.e. cherished. A loving relationship all day long includes:

- a) Speaking to her with love and respect,
- b) Doing things that make her job easier,
- c) Not doing things that make her job harder, and
- d) Providing non-sexual affection often, every day. How often? Ten times a day is a reasonable goal.

In addition, good sex requires some understanding of a woman's PSYCHOLOGY. To be able to talk, to share her thoughts, feelings, and fears, do more to draw a woman close to a man than most anything else.

Before marriage, when you were courting, you looked for opportunities to talk and to listen. The man is willing to listen, and the woman is willing to talk. Often the man will talk more openly before marriage than after. He has a goal in mind, and men generally will do whatever they think they need to do to accomplish a goal. This verbal communication is as much or more important after marriage as before marriage.

Knowledge of the woman's PSYCHOLOGY includes:

- a) Her need for direction (verbal)
- b) Her need for approval (verbal)
- c) Her need to feel understood (affection and good communication)
- d) Her need to feel provided for (food, clothing, and shelter—the bills paid).

Because we, as men are goal orientated, when women talk and share a fear or a problem, our reaction is to offer a solution. To us the solution may be simple, and because we are so quick to offer it, we cut off conversation, which is really what is needed. Conversation for a woman means closeness, security, and trust. In this type of environment a woman will normally find it easier to "let go" sexually and receive the pleasure God intended she receive in sex.

In verbal communication between husband and wife, there is never a place to make fun of, laugh at, ridicule, criticize, or belittle. When either husband or wife does this, they will tend to stop the other partner from opening up in the future. Feeling loved, accepted, and approved is just as important for husbands as for wives. The right type of verbal communication contributes a lot toward having these feelings.

In addition, it is very important that you, as a husband, develop some knowledge of your wife's sexual PHYSIOLOGY.

A knowledge of the woman's PHYSIOLOGY includes:

1. A submissive wife with a knowledgeable, loving husband can often reach a sexual climax more frequently than her husband in a given amount of time.
2. If a wife receives at least as much pleasure from the sexual relationship as her husband does, she has the potential to enjoy and desire sex as much or more than her husband.
3. If a woman does not receive adequate sexual pleasure and reach a climax frequently in sex, she may lose interest in sex. Or sex may become an obsession to her.
4. If a woman cannot reach a climax a high percentage of the time, it is generally because of at least one of the following:
  - a. The husband is selfish.
  - b. The husband lacks knowledge.
  - c. The wife will not allow her husband to guide her sexually.
  - d. The wife has not and will not experiment enough to learn what it takes for her to reach a climax.
  - e. The wife will not communicate (verbally) what type of stimulation brings her to a climax.
  - f. In very rare cases there is a physical or emotional problem that blocks the success of the sexual relationship.
5. In making love to his wife, it can be well for the husband to remember the saying, "Ladies First." If the wife reaches a climax BEFORE they engage in intercourse, she will most likely reach a second climax during intercourse.
6. Men often mistakenly believe that intercourse is the primary (the best or, worse yet, the ONLY) way for a wife to reach a climax. This is not so!!!

7. Sexual stimulation and arousal includes all of the following:

a. Holding

b. Hugging

c. Caressing the neck, the ears, the breasts, the buttocks, the upper legs and thighs, the feet, and the toes.

8. All of the stimulation above does not include the vaginal area but is very important in arousing a wife to the point of enabling vaginal stimulation to bring her to a climax.

Let me try to fill in some of the blanks left in the outline above. For most men the way for them to find pleasure in sex is experimented with in the form of self-stimulation as boys. In addition, the penis is fairly obvious and when erect, very obvious, and most boys discover it very early in life.

In contrast, for women the vagina (and the portions of the vaginal area that bring arousal, pleasure, and a climax when stimulated) is not as obvious. When aroused, there are physical changes that indicate arousal.

However, they are more subtle, consisting of flushed skin, heavier breathing, erect nipples, swelling of the clitoris, and lubrication of the vagina. In addition, apparently, self-stimulation is not quite as universal with girls as with boys and so more women than men do not know where or how to stimulate or be stimulated (touched, caressed, or massaged) to bring them to a climax.

Unfortunately for both boys and girls, many well-meaning parents make a big deal out of self-stimulation and punish for it. Many parents cannot talk about the sexual parts of the human body using the legitimate words to describe them. When speaking of the portions of the body that, when stimulated, bring sexual pleasure, they are often described as dirty and/or smelly. All of this must be overcome if a husband and a wife are going to be able to communicate effectively their likes and dislikes in sex. For many, this leaves the feeling that there is something inherently dirty, unclean, or sinful about the parts of our bodies that give sexual pleasure. I would like to remind you of the Apostle Paul's statement in I Corinthians 12:23: The parts of the body that we think are less honorable are the ones we give special honor. So our unpresentable parts are made more presentable. However, our presentable parts don't need this kind of treatment. God has put the body together and given special honor to the part that doesn't have it.

While I want to encourage modesty and propriety in discussing sex, I do believe that God designed sex, and we can talk about sex in plain and understandable terms without being unchaste. I would encourage you, at the beginning of your marriage to make it a point to become comfortable with the vocabulary that describes the sexual parts of your bodies. Develop the ability to talk comfortably about your own body as well as your spouse's. The times it takes will be time well spent.

Many husbands think that intercourse and sex is the same thing or that sex is intercourse. Along with this misunderstanding is the misunderstanding that hard, fast, and rough are what bring the most pleasure to your wife. Many husbands have been married for years before discovering that this is generally not true.

The most pleasure is generally brought to a wife by light, gentle, rhythmic touching or caressing. For many wives, the stimulation that brings them to a climax CAN NOT be accomplished through intercourse. (Other wives, if adequately aroused through loving caresses, touching, and kissing, can achieve a climax with intercourse – for most, more than one climax.)

For both men and women, it is a fact that there are areas of the body from the top of the head to the end of the toes that, when caressed, massaged, kissed and/or licked, can bring pleasure and sexual arousal. The more time spent in loving caresses in these areas, the more arousal, the stronger the climax when it comes. Like most things we do or build, the more time we take, the better the job. In marriage, there should be a give and take, a back and forth, as first one and then the other brings pleasure to their spouse.

In direct stimulation or caressing of the clitoris and vaginal area of the wife or penis of the husband, men tend to be too hard, heavy, or rough and women tend to be too light, gentle, or tender. This is because each tends to use the technique that would be the most enjoyable to them. This is not to say men don't enjoy light touching; however, it generally is not as effective in producing a climax and ejaculation. Nor is this to say that when adequately aroused and on the verge of reaching a climax, a woman may both need and enjoy very firm and rapid stimulation. Talk to each other, experiment, and soon you will understand what brings the most pleasure to your spouse.

A word of caution is in order here for you as a wife. While in most areas of the body men enjoy firm stimulation or massaging, there is one area where this is not true. While many men enjoy a wife stroking or lightly squeezing their testicles (balls) they are very tender in most men. I have never heard of a man who enjoyed having his testicles squeezed hard. If you are too hard or rough, you may get a reaction you don't want. Go easy and gentle here, and again, talk to each other.

In making love to your wife, the head, lips, ears, neck, breasts, buttocks, thighs, legs, and feet can all be kissed, stroked, and caressed with the result of building sexual desire, arousal, or tension BEFORE direct stimulation of the clitoris and the vaginal area. Before intercourse, when caressing the vaginal area, it is important to know the area that produces the most intense sexual feelings for the wife. That area is NOT INSIDE the vagina but is outside. The area of most exquisite feeling is generally in the area just below the pubic bone (outside of the vagina) and is called the clitoris. Frequently, it cannot be stimulated directly in intercourse, and, therefore, many women do not reach a climax during intercourse. A husband needs to know that there is a band of nerve endings (that bring great arousal and ultimately a climax) that begins outside the vagina and in the area of the pubic bone and extends down and inside the vagina to what has been referred to as the "G-Spot." This is the general area where sexual stimulation, resulting in arousal and, ultimately, climax is located.

Be slow – steady – gentle – rhythmic – and patient. It takes time, but what's the hurry? I am often asked, "How much time?" I often answer, "How long is a rope?" There are many variables. One or both may be already aroused by events of the day, long absence, or thinking of their partner during the day. In this case it probably wouldn't take long. On the other hand, one may be preoccupied and distracted, and it would take a good while.

In addition, as with any skill, the more the husband and wife practice, generally the more pleasure each can provide for the other, in less time – if for some strange reason you are in a hurry. Suggestion relevant to time: loving, caressing, and kissing (foreplay) – ten minutes to an hour before intercourse. Ideally, the wife would have at least one climax during this time. Time for intercourse (after the foreplay as described above): thirty seconds to one hour: it is up to you, and a lot of factors can influence the time.

Let me give some suggestions for a wife. Husbands are not all that much different than wives when it comes to receiving pleasure. The PSYCHOLOGY of the man is not all that much different than the woman. Just as the woman needs to feel loved, accepted, and approved of, so does the man. If he is belittled, criticized, and put-down verbally, it can make it difficult for him to be as loving and caring sexually as the wife wants him to be. Sometimes women think that men don't have feelings, or their feelings cannot be hurt. This is not true. Men may not show they are hurt; they may not let on that their confidence is shaken, but it may be. The fact that they don't show it may mean it will cause them even more problems as the years go by. In fact, there is a percentage of men who cannot function at all, and it is because of the way they feel about themselves,

contributed to by the way their wives treat or communicate with them.

The PHYSIOLOGY of a man is obviously different than that of a woman. When a man is sexually stimulated it is generally obvious because his excitement or arousal produces an erect penis. The arousal may come from his thoughts, what he sees, what someone is saying, or direct stimulation to the penis.

When a man is young and a couple newly married, it is common for some men to be aroused almost continually (it might seem to his wife). Later, there may be times when the wife feels he is not interested in her or sex at all. Factors that can distract or prevent his excitement are poor health, medication, excessive work, anxiety, or frustration.

At these times, an understanding wife, who can rekindle the flame of arousal, will be called blessed by her husband. Unfortunately, too often a wife feels rejected and unloved or no longer exciting to her husband and draws back into herself. Here is where some direct stimulation, in the form of a back rub, or an overall massage that ultimately focuses on the genital area, can work wonders. If a wife is confident enough to realize that it is not she who is no longer attractive or that her husband doesn't love her but that he is distracted for a time, she can help him work through the problem. At times like this, he really needs the release – the affection – and the acceptance – that one receives in good sex in marriage but for the moment he may not realize it.

It will be a while before you get to this place in life, but also, as a man ages, he generally doesn't get an erection just because of his thoughts, just because you are beautiful, and he sees you. Again, a wife who realizes that this is a product of aging and will work with it can really improve the relationship as well as her own pleasure. Again, direct stimulation of the penis, being willing to “come on” to your husband, will be just what the doctor ordered. In fact, if you are aggressive enough (and at the same time sensitive to his feelings) in this, there may be no need for a doctor to treat your husband because he is unable to function sexually.

A wife, like a husband, needs to learn the physiology of her husband. It is far more important than learning how to bake a cake. And yet, many wives give much more thought to cooking than they do to sex in their marriage. This is a mistake.

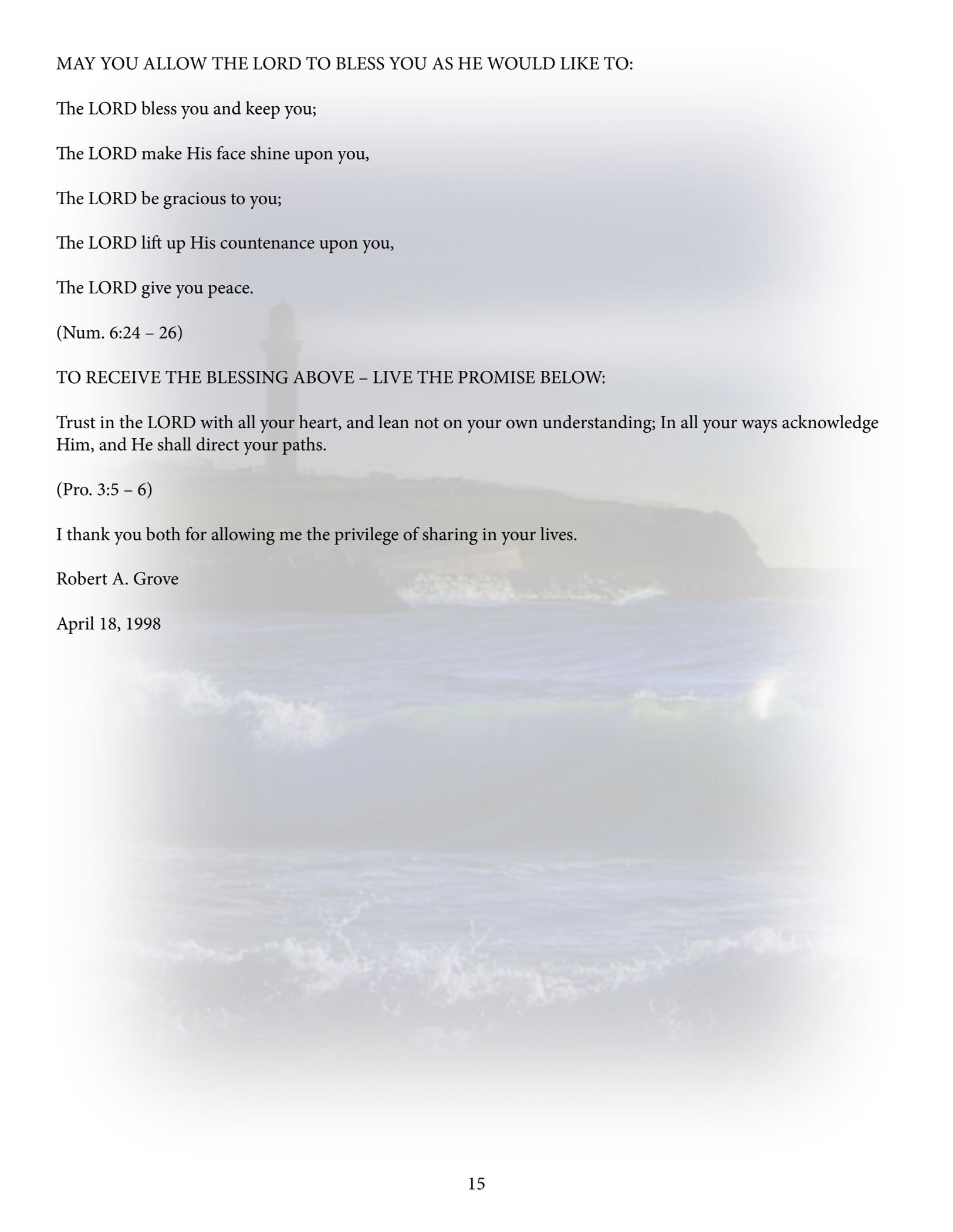
Remember, these are just suggestions (those not from God's word). Take your time, have fun, and play. Too much focus on performance will detract from the pleasure. Also, remember that the ground will not always move, or every time you have sex will not produce the greatest fireworks of feelings and pleasure.

The time spent in loving each other is time well spent. Providing comfort and pleasure to each other is not time spent: it is time invested in a happy marriage relationship.

Husbands and wives both need to realize that mind reading does not come with marriage. If you want something, ask for it. If you want to try something, suggest it. Be open to each other's ideas. Never ridicule, never belittle, and always be concerned for what will bring the most pleasure to the other.

If you have difficulty achieving a mutually satisfying sexual relationship, please get counsel. Be patient with

each other in making adjustments. Do not be discouraged if things are not great immediately. If there is pain after a couple months, it would be wise to see a medical doctor. If there are other areas of difficulty, seek out someone you have confidence in and ask for their counsel or advice. Don't allow the years to pass without achieving a mutually satisfying sexual relationship. Difficulties are easier to resolve when they are young, rather than after years of disappointment and frustration.



MAY YOU ALLOW THE LORD TO BLESS YOU AS HE WOULD LIKE TO:

The LORD bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine upon you,

The LORD be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,

The LORD give you peace.

(Num. 6:24 – 26)

TO RECEIVE THE BLESSING ABOVE – LIVE THE PROMISE BELOW:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

(Pro. 3:5 – 6)

I thank you both for allowing me the privilege of sharing in your lives.

Robert A. Grove

April 18, 1998