

# Sex on Request: A Faith-based Counselor Explains

Lee J. Langley, M.S., LMFT

Cornerstone Counseling

lee@thevine.net

<http://www.scvfamilycounseling.com>

Sex is almost always a topic of conversation at some point in couples/marriage counseling. Typically, the husband complains there isn't enough sex, while the wife laments that she's too tired, overwhelmed, or not feeling loved enough to be motivated for sex. Unless the couple is able to resolve this dilemma, the tension between the spouses is usually played out in a variety of unhealthy and unproductive ways. Often, a couple finds themselves fighting about things that have nothing at all to do with intimacy as a substitute for confronting the real issue.

Typically, a husband will approach his wife for sex and encounter what he feels is rejection. If this situation is repeated again and again, rather than beginning a dialogue on the subject, he'll start to distance himself from his wife, giving her the "cold shoulder". By withdrawing his affection he avoids additional rejection and exacts payback for the wounding he feels he's endured. This pattern may seem obvious, and it is common indeed. What's not so obvious is the insidious effect this tension has on the relationship over time, as negativity builds and the spouses begin to find fault in each other over issues that would, in the past, have been considered trivial.

Wives are often not aware of how hurt their husbands are by their rejection and husbands are equally oblivious to how unloved their wives are feeling, as their arguments rarely involve sex itself. The wife is furious that her mate leaves his wet towel on the bathroom floor and he's incensed that she spends an hour on the phone with her sister every night. Of course, these complaints are merely more comfortable substitutes for the actual issue: SEX. When the topic of sex is actually discussed, the air is usually highly charged with hurt and anger, thus inhibiting any truly satisfying outcome.

In Christian-based counseling sessions we turn to the Bible for answers as to how to handle this seemingly daunting issue. 1 Corinthians 7:3 offers guidance:

**The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. 5 Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.**

This passage can obviously be misused by a husband (or wife) who feels entitled to sex "on demand", but there is another way to view the passage. It seems clear that both husband and wife are to make themselves available to their spouse sexually at all times (do not deprive each other...). Thus, rejection is taken out of the mix. However, in context, it should be noted that while sex should be available upon request, it should never be demanded by a spouse when it is clear that his/her partner would suffer in some way by complying with the request. Examples would include a wife who is in bed with a fever, a

©2012 Lee J Langley. All rights reserved. You may redistribute this article, "as is", i.e. without modification or fees of any sort.

Visit <http://www.realpsychsolutions.com> for more information and articles.

wife or husband who feels uncomfortable engaging in intimacy when the children are under foot, or perhaps one or the other has just received some troubling news.

The sexual arena is a prime example of how godly submission and leadership can be implemented within a Christian marriage to great benefit. Submission would imply that the wife "suck it up" and make herself available to her husband sexually whenever he asks. Godly leadership, on the other hand, would entail a husband never imposing himself sexually on his wife when he sees that she's uncomfortable for any reason. One could extrapolate from this example to the marriage relationship as a whole: The wife should ALWAYS be in godly submission (meaning that she voluntarily places herself under the care of her husband). The husband should NEVER take advantage of this gift of submission, but should instead seek to put his wife's needs ahead of his own both sexually and in making decisions in general for the family. In this way, the marriage works, like hand in glove, in a way that is edifying and emotionally fulfilling for both partners.

It seems obvious that marital partners should endeavor to go out of their way each day to make their spouse's life better. After all, this was the way they acted during their courtship. It seems so simple, yet the concept has often been lost in a maze of anger and hurt. Sometimes couples just need reminding with respect to why they loved each other in the first place and there's no better way to revive the old feelings than by following God's plan for marital success.

#### **About the Author:**

Lee J. Langley, M.S., LMFT is a licensed marriage and family therapist providing Christian-based counseling to couples, individuals, and families in the Santa Clarita/Valencia, California area. Mr. Langley specializes in helping couples resolve conflict, repair their relationships, and find the love they once had. He can be reached at Cornerstone Counseling: (661) 297-7255 or email Mr. Langley at: [lee@thevine.net](mailto:lee@thevine.net)