



On Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Damascus Road tried something new: a question and answer session with the morning's teacher, Tim Suddarth. Reprinted here are the questions that were asked that morning.

### When I get married won't that cure my lust problems?

No. Satan did not even show up to tempt Adam until he had a wife. Many men simply kill their sexuality before marriage and once they are married, their desires awaken in full force. Consequently, once you have been married long enough to learn how to please a woman and be adventurous, you will likely find your desires for sexual sin increase rather than decrease, which is why you need to discipline yourself to channel all of those desires solely to your wife.

### Is it a sin to notice that a woman is beautiful?

No. Genesis 12:10–14 says that Sarai was beautiful, despite the fact that she was quite old. Some women are lovely and to recognize this fact is, in itself, not a sin. However, recognizing a woman's beauty does become a sin when a man lusts after that beautiful woman and begins to undress her in his mind.

### What about sleeping over, but not having sex?

Proverbs asks: Can a man scoop hot coals onto his lap and not burn himself? The answer: no. First off, is that really the kind of witness you want to give? Odds are she has roommates, neighbors, or whatever. What happens when you walk out of her house in the morning? Is that protecting her reputation?

"Well, I didn't do anything."

Does anyone know that? We are supposed to be above approach. To allow not even a hint of sexual immorality. Here's a question: If I wasn't married, but had a Christian girlfriend and I occasionally crashed over at her house would that bother you? It should.

### What is flirtation, per se?

Well, the dictionary would say that flirtation is: to behave as though attracted to or trying to attract someone, but for amusement rather than with serious intentions. I think the real question here is something like: "Is it okay to flirt?" There is nothing wrong with letting someone of the opposite sex know you are interested, but one should be serious about it. If flirting is, as our definition says, for amusement rather than serious intention, then it is an apt description of what the harlot in Proverbs chapter 7 is doing.

## Are premarital things other than actual sex okay?

The issue here isn't "where is the line?"

The issue is the sexual relationship doesn't begin until marriage. "Well, oral sex isn't really sex, right? Fondling and touching isn't really sex either, right?"

I think we have this all messed up and the best example of this is when the problem came to the fore with our former president, Bill Clinton:

*"Did you have sex with that woman?"*

*"No, I did not."*

*"Did she put her mouth on your penis?"*

*"Oh yeah, she did that all the time, but that's not sex."*

*"Really? Let's ask your wife about that. Do you think she would consider it sex?"*

**All** sexual behavior is reserved for marriage.

## So, those of us who are still single shouldn't have sex?

Yes. If you're single you shouldn't have sex. The Bible is incredibly clear that sex is designed and reserved for marriage.

## Wouldn't developing SKILZ help, too?

The only place you can truly develop SKILZ is in the context of loving sexual intimacy with your spouse.

## How far do "conjugal rights" go? Is it such a bad thing to say no?

The important thing to remember is that both you and your spouse are supposed to be looking out for the other's interest. Like a lawyer does for his client, you should be an advocate for your spouse's sex life. you should do whatever you can to make it wonderful. It's about serving, not about insisting on your "rights."

As far as saying no goes, we don't want to be legalistic about these things. There may be times where your spouse has a very legitimate reason for telling you "no." In general though, we should do as Paul told the Corinthians: "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

## So if my wife says she is tired, I should tell her to get over it so we can get busy?

No, if your wife is telling you that she's tired, maybe you should have been more loving throughout the day and created an environment where she desires to have sex with you. Women who are "too tired" to have sex often don't feel appreciated. Remember the Top 3 desires in women about sex: affection, time & energy and foreplay. Try working up to sex throughout the day. Compliments, an affectionate touch, making dinner, a massage, or any number of things can show her that you are spending time and energy on her and relieve the stress that wears her out. Or maybe right before bed isn't the best time for the two of you to have sex. Women appreciate foreplay and if your wife is tired, maybe you waited too long to get things started for her to have a satisfying experience. both of you bear responsibility for

your sexual relationship. Scripture clearly commands both of you to set aside your preferences and strive to make sex as wonderful as possible for the other. The emphasis is on giving to the other, not on taking.

### **So are positions other than missionary okay?**

Yes, be creative! Other positions are fine as long as we remember that our responsibility is to make lovemaking as wonderful as possible for our spouse, so avoid positions that are painful or uncomfortable to the point that lovemaking is no longer able to be your focus. Married couples should have a sex life that is tender, exciting, nurturing, communicative, loving and creative.

### **So what does that mean for someone who's had sex before they're married or for couples?**

It means it will be harder than it would be for one who has waited. The best advice I can give someone in this situation is this: First, stop having sex. Second, ask God to remove your memory of past sexual encounters. It might sound weird, but it worked for me. Third, when you get to the point where married looks likely, make sure to have an honest discussion about your past with them.

### **So, based on First Corinthians, married couples should have sex whenever they want?**

Yes. In First Corinthians, Paul teaches that the only time that married couple should hold back from sex is if they mutually agree to for a time of fasting and prayer.

### **Did Adam and Eve have sex in the Garden of Eden?**

I bet they did! God creates the most beautiful woman in the whole world (remember Adam has no standard of beauty other than Eve - his wife) for Adam, essentially walks her down the aisle, presides over their marriage and tells them to "be fruitful and multiply" - oh, and she's naked - what do you think Adam's response is?

### **If Jesus lived today, would he be a chick magnet and lose his virginity by accident?**

Women would certainly be drawn to him today, just as they were then because he had such a huge capacity for understanding and empathy and he treated them with honor and respect. But, no, he wouldn't lose his virginity by accident. It's not something you can "fall into" accidentally like you would a puddle of water. People don't lose their virginity by accident, they make a choice.

### **Is cosmetic surgery okay?**

It's not forbidden, but it depends on your motives – issues of vanity and discontentment with yourself – then that's not okay. If you're married, you certainly need to discuss it with your spouse. If it's something that you feel would be beneficial to you and your relationship, maybe after a particularly difficult delivery. Also, sometimes people need cosmetic surgery for health reasons. I know the stereotype is that if you want a nose job, you claim a deviated septum, but that actually is a medical condition that needs repair from time to time. I know a woman who had to have breast reduction surgery because it was killing her back and causing her health issues.

## **What about homosexuality? It's genetic. How can you say that's wrong?**

I don't really think there have been enough studies to say one way or the other, but it seems that there is at least some disposition toward homosexuality that is not a conscious choice. I believe it is s a predisposition toward something, but just because one is predisposed to something doesn't remove choice. For example: every male in my family line for three generations back have been alcoholics, so odds are pretty good that if I were to start knocking a few back every night after work, I'd join them pretty quick. I'm predisposed to be an alcoholic, but I can choose not to drink thereby removing that likelihood from possibility. In the same way, I would say that even if there is a predisposition towards homosexual feelings for some (which I tend to believe), the actual issue is the individual's response to their situation. If they act on those feelings, they make a choice.

## **Should Christians ever get divorced?**

I've included some information below on what the Bible says about divorce, but I think the most relevant issue is love. Far too often in our world today people see love as something out of their control. They speak of love as something that happens as if by accident. "I just fell in love," they'll say as if they had no more control over it than slipping in a mud puddle. The simple fact of the matter is that love is a choice that we make. And it's a choice that has to be made again and again throughout the life of a marriage.

God's desire is always the repair of relationship. It is never God's wish for a couple to divorce, in fact, Malachi 2:16 says that God hates divorce. That said, God provided for the "hardness of human hearts" in allowing divorce when the vows of marriage are broken. The Bible lists four traditional marriage vows in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and Exodus 21:10-11. These vows included commitments to feed, clothe, love and be faithful. The vow to feed and to clothe indicate a focus on the physical needs of a spouse. The vows to be faithful and to love included both physical and emotional components.

There then are four biblical grounds for legitimate divorce: unfaithfulness, neglect of food, neglect of clothing and neglect of conjugal love. I believe that modern-day descriptions of these grounds would include any form of abuse or a persistent withholding of affection, be it physical or otherwise.

## **Is sexual compatibility significant in marriage? Is incompatibility grounds for divorce?**

Married couples have a responsibility to develop their own sex life separate from cultural expectations and pressures. For some couples, making love once a week is perfect. For others 4-5 times a week might be exactly what they should be doing. Because our spouses are human, they'll sometimes disappoint us by not wanting sex as often as we do or wanting sex way more often than we do. Each couple needs to work it out on their own, respecting each other the whole while. Desiring different amounts of sex is not grounds for divorce, it is merely something to overcome together. As I shared above, refusing to be intimate with your spouse physically is grounds for divorce according to scripture.

**Questions dealing with masturbation and pornography will be addressed in next week's email as they may be answered by Josh's message on Sunday.**