



Chris and Rachel are proud to announce
the re-release in softback of the popular
resource for understanding God's plan
for sexuality in marriage.

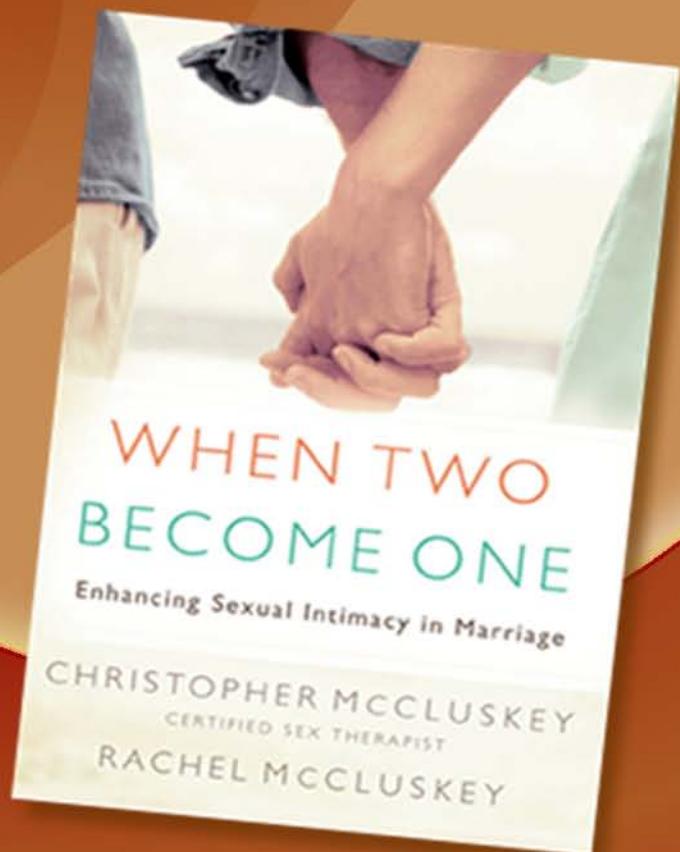
When Two Become One is having a
tremendous impact in church
groups and in the lives of married
couples all across the U.S.

WHEN TWO BECOME ONE

*Enhancing Sexual Intimacy
in Marriage*

**One of the healthiest,
most biblically
consistent, and
God-honoring
presentations of
sexuality I have ever
read."**

~ Dr. Gary Oliver



The Authors

Christopher McCluskey McCluskey is a popular speaker, author, and professional certified coach. He is president of Coaching for Christian Living, a state-of-the-art international coaching business, and serves as director of the Christian Track at the Institute of Life Coach Training. As a former psychotherapist, he co-founded the American Board of Christian Sex Therapists and the Institute for Sexual Wholeness, a master's-level training program for Christian counselors. Chris produced the highly-acclaimed DVD program, *Coaching Couples into Passionate Intimacy: God's Intentions for Martial Sexual Union*, and has appeared in numerous television and video programs on sexuality from a Christian perspective.

Rachel McCluskey is also a life coach who homeschools their seven children. She and Chris have co-authored several chapters in popular Christian books, including *The Complete Marriage Book*, *A Celebration of Sex*, and *The Complete Christian Parenting Book*.



Book Endorsements

One of the healthiest, most Biblically-consistent and God-honoring presentations of sexuality I have ever read.

~Dr. Gary J. Oliver
executive director,
The Center for Marriage & Family Studies at John Brown University

I strongly endorse this book. It should be mandatory reading for all pre-marital couples.

~Dr. Archibald D. Hart
dean emeritus,
Fuller Theological Seminary, and bestselling author

This is a resource every pastor needs with material every marriage can benefit from!

~Gene Appel
Associate Pastor
Willow Creek Community Church

No matter how long you've been married, (or if you're about to be married),
When Two Become One can enrich your life.

~Dr. H. Norman Wright
best-selling author of *Quiet Times for Couples*

This is a wonderful book that I can endorse enthusiastically. It is clearly written, interesting, Biblically-based, richly illustrated with stories, always in good taste, and intensely practical.

~Dr. Gary Collins
founding editor
of *Christian Counseling Today* magazine and bestselling author

Offering a refreshing approach, the McCluskeys capture the basics of marital sexual intimacy with a much needed emphasis on the emotional-spiritual connection so vital to couples discovering complete sexual satisfaction.

~Dr. Clifford & Joyce Penner
best-selling authors of *The Gift of Sex* and *Men and Sex*

Book Endorsements

No one brings together the spiritual and sexual parts of marriage in as clear and meaningful a way as the McCluskeys.

~Drs. David & Jan Stoop
best-selling authors of *When Couples Pray Together* and *The Complete Marriage Book*

When Two Become One will challenge you to celebrate God's good gift of sex in your marriage and will help you create a deeper intimacy and connectedness with your spouse. The question and answer sections just may answer yours!

~David & Claudia Arp
authors of the *10 Great Dates* series and *Love Life for Parents*

This book is a must-read for couples wishing to enhance their love life.

~Dr. Douglas Rosenau
bestselling author of *A Celebration of Sex*

If you only read one book on this subject, this ought to be the one!

~Dr. Sandra D. Wilson
author of *Released From Shame* and *Into Abba's Arms*

When Two Become One helps couples understand marital sexual intimacy as an act of worship, painting a beautiful picture of the way God intended it.

~Al Denson
award-winning Christian artist/songwriter

... should be read by every married couple who wish to transform their experience of simply 'having sex' into truly '*making love*'.

~Elder Bobby Gibson Sr.
**director of counseling,
The Potter's House Church/T.D. Jakes Ministries**

Book Endorsements

The McCluskeys unveil a model to assist couples in growing deeper in their love for God and one another. Enjoy this magnificent picture of marital love as commitment, action, devotion and sacrifice.

~Dr. William R. Cutrer, M.D. OB/GYN
certified Christian Sex Therapist,
author of *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*,
and Gheens professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Chris's warm, knowledgeable, practical teaching has helped my students gain a biblical perspective on sexuality that has helped them personally and professionally.

~Dr. Jim Hurley
department chair, Marriage and Family Therapy Program,
Reformed Theological Seminary

Christopher and Rachel McCluskey go where few Christians have gone, demonstrating how sexual intimacy is not only God's plan for marriage but is a powerful means of worshipping and glorifying the Father. We'll refer to this book over and over – it's a must-read.

~Clarence and Brenda Shuler
**Building Lasting Relationships, Inc., (in conjunction with FamilyLife
and the Billy Graham School of Evangelism)**

A soon-to-be classic on sexuality within the Christian community.

~Dr. Robert D. McCall
coordinator of missionary care,
Church of God World Missions International

Christopher and Rachel blow away the mist that has shrouded the sacrament of marriage, revealing the Biblical truth that sexuality is the physical picture of a spiritual reality.

~Monte & Karye Swan
authors of *Romancing Your Child's Heart* and *Home and Hearth*

This is a wonderful book that speaks to the sacred heart of marital sex.
I will assign couples I work with to read it together.

~Rev. Michael Sytsma, PhD

Sample Interview Questions

Guest intro:

My guests today are Christopher & Rachel McCluskey, authors of the highly-acclaimed book *When Two Become One: Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*. First published in 2004, the book was re-released in oversized paperback last year and was one of the top sellers in its category in 2006. Christopher is a popular speaker, professional life coach, and a former Christian counselor certified in sex therapy. He is a co-founder of the American Board of Christian Sex Therapists and of the Institute for Sexual Wholeness, a master's level training program for Christian counselors. His wife, Rachel, is also a life coach and the homeschooling mother of their seven children. They're joining me today from their ranch in the foothills of southern Missouri.

You may or may not want these few sentences about the book itself:

The book casts a beautiful and compelling vision of marital intimacy as God intended it. The most unique feature is an innovative model called *The Lovemaking Cycle*© which is now being taught in seminaries and graduate programs in marriage counseling throughout the U.S. and overseas. The model suggests a picture of God's three-dimensional plan for sexual union (body, soul & spirit), and provides a powerful tool for addressing problem areas that can threaten the beauty of that plan.

Suggested interview questions (for either of us, unless otherwise noted):

1. Christopher, when people discover that you were a Christian sex therapist, how do they respond?
2. Why are we so reluctant to talk about sexual issues within the church community?
3. In your book, you make an immediate distinction between "having sex" and truly "making love". How do you define the differences?
4. Why do you say that Christians ought to be the most sexually fulfilled people on the planet?
5. Rachel, you state that sexual union is first and foremost a means of communication. What do you mean?
6. You see a link between sexuality and spirituality. Explain that.
7. Your book centers around a schematic model you have developed called *The Lovemaking Cycle*©. Can you give us a quick overview of the model?
8. Talk to us a little about the first of the four quadrants, "*Atmosphere*".
9. Assuming that the atmosphere or environment within a marriage is conducive

- to lovemaking, how do couples flow into the second quadrant, "Arousal"?
10. And that leads naturally to the third quadrant, "Apex"...
 11. Talk about this fourth and final quadrant of *The Lovemaking Cycle*©, the "Afterglow".
 12. Chris, toward the end of your book, you have two chapters that simply address several of the most frequently asked questions you receive from men and women about sexual intimacy. I noticed that men seem to struggle with the fact that their wives often have a lower sex drive than they do. How do you respond to that frustration?
 13. Rachel, it sounds like women often struggle with their body image. What help can you offer there?
 14. What would you say are the one or two biggest threats to sexual intimacy as God intended it?
 15. You wrap up the book by emphasizing that making love is something a couple should be doing all day long. You've alluded to this before – say a little more about that.
 16. Your book is available in Christian bookstores as well as Borders, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, Amazon, etc. You also have other resources available such as a videotape on *The Lovemaking Cycle*©. Where can people find that? (We'll give the email address for our online bookstore: www.whentwobecomeone.net).

I don't know whether or not you'll offer the book as a promotional item that people can order through your show, or if you'll do any commercials at break times for the book. If so, this is copy we have used which fits into a 60-second spot:

Sexual issues are cited as one of the primary reasons for marital conflict and divorce. Finally, a book has been written for Christians that blends the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of marriage with the sexual. *When Two Become One: Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage* has been called a "must-read" for couples wishing to enhance their love life. Written by former Christian sex therapist Christopher McCluskey and his wife, Rachel, this practical, detailed resource offers a vision of lovemaking that facilitates a deeper experience of intimacy on all planes of marriage.

The most unique feature of *When Two Become One* is *The Lovemaking Cycle*©, an innovative model that captures the heart of truly making love (as contrasted with simply "having sex"). The model suggests a picture of God's three-dimensional plan for sexual union and provides a powerful tool for identifying problems that can threaten the beauty of that plan.

Whether you are newly married or have been wed for decades, now is the time to ignite the intimate, passionate love God created you to enjoy! Get your copy of *When Two Become One*, available at bookstores everywhere.

Speaking Services Agreement

This Speaking Services Agreement is entered into on the _____, between the following parties: Christopher W. McCluskey, PO Box 599, Edgar Springs, MO 65462 (hereinafter referred to as "Speaker") and _____ (hereinafter referred to as 'Client.')

Scheduled Event: Speaker agrees to make presentations (listed below) for Client on _____ at above stated client address.

- Talk 1: A Cultural Perspective on Sexuality: How Did We Get In Such a Mess?
- Talk 2: A Biblical Perspective on Sexuality: What Was God's Original Design?
- Talk 3: A Practical Perspective on Sexuality: How Can We Experience More of God's Plan for Marital Intimacy?
- Talk 4: A Chance to Get Your Questions Answered: Q & A, Using Anonymous Questions Submitted on 3 x 5 Cards

Compensation: The Client agrees to pay or reimburse the Speaker for the following:

- ❖ Stipend: The mutually agreed-upon stipend for the above-named events is \$5,000.
- ❖ Travel Expenses including the most direct and convenient flight available, lodging, meals, parking and travel to and from the airport.

Timing of Compensation: The Client agrees to pay or reimburse Speaker upon completion of the above agreed to presentations, upon receipt of all expenses and upon completion of final speaking engagement.

Materials: The Client agrees to provide Speaker with an 8ft table located in a prominent and visible location within the flow of traffic before and after the event so that Speaker can offer directly related books and DVD's to attendees. Furthermore, the Client agrees to provide volunteers to man the tables before and after the event.

Cancellation: Either party may cancel this agreement without remuneration if submitted in writing and received by the other party on or before Monday, September 17, 2007. After the close of business Monday, September 17, 2007, the defaulting party will be invoiced and expected to pay \$1000.00 for cancellation of contract for any reason other than an act of God. An Act of God is defined as fire, flood, tornado, earthquake, death or sickness of Speaker requiring hospitalization, car accident or other unforeseen disastrous incident which would directly prohibit the Client from hosting the event or the Speaker from being able to travel.

This contract is limited to the above named events. It does not imply or convey permission to record, copyright, distribute or sell audio, video or written transcripts

of talks given at the Scheduled Events. A separate agreement will be used to establish any arrangements of this regard.

Signed: _____ Date _____

Signed: _____ Date _____
Client

Audio/Visual Services Addendum

This Audio/Visual Services Addendum is entered into on _____, between the following parties: Christopher W. McCluskey, PO Box 599, Edgar Springs, MO 65462 (hereinafter referred to as "Speaker") and _____ (hereinafter referred to as 'Client.')

In reference to the Speaking Services Agreement entered between Speaker and Client on the _____, whereas the Speaker has agreed to make presentations (listed below) for Client on - _____ at above stated client address,

- A Cultural Perspective on Sexuality: How Did We Get In Such a Mess?
- A Biblical Perspective on Sexuality: What Was God's Original Design?
- A Practical Perspective on Sexuality: How Can We Experience More of God's Plan for Marital Intimacy?
- A Chance to Get Your Questions Answered: Q & A, Using Anonymous Questions Submitted on 3 x 5 Cards

Client agrees to provide, at no cost, a high-quality digital audio recording of each of the talks to the Speaker. It is understood that the Speaker will plan to edit and reformat the recordings, making them available for purchase by anyone in attendance at the retreat as well as any other interested parties. Copyrights to the material will be held solely by the Speaker and no permission is granted under this agreement for the Client to resell or in any way edit, reformat or repackaging the material for their own profit.

Signed: _____ Date _____

Signed: _____ Date _____
Client

Sample Flyer

Marriage Enrichment Seminar!

Based upon the highly acclaimed book

WHEN TWO BECOME ONE *Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*

Authors Christopher & Rachel McCluskey will share a beautiful and compelling vision of God's intentions for marital intimacy. Drawing from their newly released book, the McCluskeys will present an overview of our Christian theology of sexuality and explain their innovative model, *The Lovemaking Cycle*®, which is used in seminaries and graduate programs in marriage counseling throughout America. The model suggests a picture of God's 3-dimensional plan for sexual union (body, soul & spirit), and provides a powerful tool for addressing problem areas that can threaten the beauty of that plan.

Whether you are newly married or wed for decades, make plans to attend this event! It will be held at **YOUR CHURCH** in **YOUR CITY** on **DATE**, from **TIME**. Childcare will not be provided and material will not be appropriate for children. (We recommend that you arrange babysitting and plan a dinner date after the talk!)

Cost is \$10 per couple and you must pre-register by calling the church office during business hours at **YOUR PHONE NUMBER**.

"No one brings together the spiritual and sexual parts of marriage in as clear and meaningful a way as the McCluskeys."

~Drs. David & Jan Stoop
authors of *The Complete Marriage Book*

CHRISTOPHER McCLUSKEY is a popular speaker, licensed counselor, certified sex therapist and life coach. He is a cofounder of the American Board of Christian Sex Therapists and of the Institute for Sexual Wholeness, a master's-level training program for Christian counselors.

RACHEL McCLUSKEY is also a life coach who homeschools their six children. She and Chris have co-authored several chapters in popular Christian books, including *The Complete Marriage Book*, *A Celebration of Sex*, and *The Complete Christian Parenting Book*. The McCluskeys live on their family ranch in Edgar Springs, MO.

Come to the...

Fields of the Fatherless

Around the world . . . everyday, children are cast aside; abandoned in the forgotten fields of the fatherless. Though desolate and barren, God declares this land "Holy Ground;" a hallowed place where the needy reside and His presence dwells. The orphan's cry is a divine priority. Their names and needs are written on the corridors of God's heart. He may be calling you to follow Him into these Fields; where hope changes everything. You can embrace a little life today through International Adoption. Children wait in Bulgaria, China, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, and Russia longing for a loving family, earnestly praying for hope to arrive. To learn more about International adoption please call us today.

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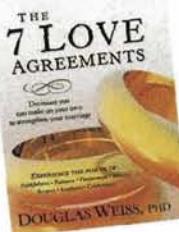
Email: info@allgodschildren.org

www.allgodschildren.org

between the covers

The 7 Love Agreements

by Douglas Weiss (*Siloam*).



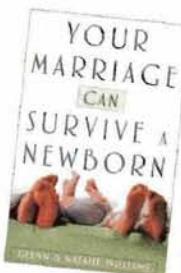
I'll never be poor again.
I'll never be the kind of parent my father/mother was. These are the kind of agreements people sometimes make with themselves that, if kept, can break a

cycle of poverty and abuse. In this book, Dr. Weiss addresses seven agreements you can make that will drastically improve the state of your marriage—agreements made not with your spouse, but with yourself. So even if your mate isn't motivated to change, your marriage can still benefit from keeping them. After explaining how making adjustments in each area covered (faithfulness, patience, forgiveness, service, respect, kindness, and celebration) can enhance or strengthen your marriage, there's also a list of specific agreement samples to use or brainstorm.

Your Marriage Can Survive a Newborn

by Glenn and Natalie Williams (Broadman & Holman).

No matter how many parenting books you read or veteran parents you talk to, none of it can completely prepare you for the life-altering experience of parenthood. What is needed and what this book provides is the reassuring voice to young mommies and daddies that they are not



alone in the sometimes overwhelming emotions and conflicts they're bound to face. Sleep deprivation, labor division, and the all too real need for non-baby time are just a few of the issues these seasoned parents cover that will provide the newbies with a deep sigh of relief that their family—and marriage—can survive this time of adjustment.

When Two Become One

by Christopher & Rachel McCluskey (Revell).

Few marriage experts would argue that a healthy, satisfying sex life is paramount to a

happy, healthy marriage. But as Christians, this certified sex therapist and his wife help us to see that this mere act can be a much deeper intimate experience that carries over to other areas of our marriage—the differ-

ence between having sex and making love. While explaining The Lovemaking Cycle, which Christopher created, we see that this lovemaking process can be "thought of as a wheel, and if each quadrant of the wheel is functioning like it should, a couple's lovemaking will roll along nicely down the road of their lives together." More important, the book helps identify potential problems in the wheel that might make it "clunk" along or stop altogether, and provides practical steps and discussion questions to keep the wheel "greased."

—Raelynn Eickhoff

To order a copy of these or other great marriage books, go to marriagepartnership.com and click on "Marriage Resources."

The Better Sex Diet

Adding these nutrients to your daily diet will give you and your spouse a passion pick-me-up:

Zinc helps improve vaginal lubrication. Get your fix from oysters, lean beef, turkey, and almonds.

The muscles that contract and spasm during orgasm need **calcium** to function. Eat dairy, broccoli, and sweet potatoes.

Testosterone kicks your libido into high gear, and is produced with the help of **niacin** (vitamin B3). Get a sexy boost from tuna. *Source: Redbook (December 2004)*





going from good **to great**

How 30 minutes a week can re-energize your marriage

Your marriage doesn't have to be in trouble to benefit from an objective, encouraging third party—a life coach.

"If couples are able to address an issue, goal, desire, or vision proactively, they can head off any number of potential crises," asserts Christopher McCluskey, a master certified Christian coach who works with couples around the world, objectively encouraging and helping them see paths to growth and success.

McCluskey, whose background is in psychotherapy, worked primarily in marriage and family therapy for 12 years prior to becoming a coach. In 1998, he founded Coaching for Christian Living (www.christian-living.com). He is also the director of the Christian track at the Institute for Life Coach Training, an accredited school with the only distinctly Christian life coach training program in the world.

In the last several years life coaching has become more prominent among couples. Here's what McCluskey had to say about the rewards a couple can attain through life coaching.

Why would a couple seek a life coach?

Because they want to grow their marriage or they want to pursue a stronger or clearer vision for their family.

One of the most frequent reasons is to enhance their level of

intimacy. They have a good marriage but are plateauing. They may feel their lives are scattered and out of control. And they want help getting back on track, help clarifying and living out God's unique calling on their lives.

They may need help

working through obstacles to get a spouse home from the work force or a job change, or they're preparing for empty nesting or graduate school.

Another reason is blended families. A primary conflict in a blended family is children. So rather than just hold your breath and hope for the best or wait for the inevitable conflict, many blended families will work with a coach to help them proactively develop a better vision for how to blend their family and to head off the problems before they take root.



I also work with couples as they move their families into the pre-teen and teen years. A lot of parents stumble through those years never nailing down a clear vision, and they wind up having the default vision of our Western culture: simply "surviving."

They wander through those years thinking, *Where do the kids need to be now? What new activities are they involved in? How am I going to deal with this new mouthiness? What am I going to do about this new group of friends they're hanging with?*

They're constantly reacting to every new "crisis." And so couples become like a steel ball in a pinball machine, bouncing off whatever's screaming for their attention. That's not an effective way to do family or marriage. They need to identify what they're going to say "yes" to in their family and what they're going to say "no" to.

That's where coaching can help. A couples coach can help them catch a fresh vision and then use that vision to make it their reality.

What's the difference between life coaching and therapy?

Therapy is based on a "reactive" mode—in other words, responding to whatever is wrong, fixing the problem or crisis. It's about digging into the past and present to get a couple to stable, healthy functioning.

Life coaching, on the other hand, is entirely proactive. It begins with the present, but is focused on the future. If counseling is about healing and issues of brokenness, coaching is about growth and issues of vision. Coaching takes a stable, healthy functioning couple to a vibrant, dynamic, intimate level—from "acceptable" to "exceptional."

What exactly does a coach do?

A coach is an *objective* party who will help you hear yourself and God better. A coach has no agenda, no personal investment in your taking one path versus another. Instead, he or she will focus on "the gap"—that distance between what the couple is seeing right now and where they would really like to be or where they sense God would have them to be. What's God's vision for your parenting or for your marriage?

A coach will challenge the couple to think about things they may never have thought of before, or only thought of in passing. A lot of times we ask ourselves the right questions but we don't really probe for an answer.



What do you mean?

Let's say a spouse wants to change jobs or a couple wants to know how to handle their child's toddler years. The couple may ask, "What are we going to do about that?" But they don't really mean, "Hey, what *are* we going to do about that?"

In Scripture, Jesus tells us to "Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

So coaching helps couples begin asking the questions that they may have previously thrown to the wind. What are we going to do so we can live on one income to allow my spouse to start his own business? Or to stay at home? How do we discover and discern who God created us to be? How do we develop a plan to fulfill our desire to have family vacations? What is a godly vision of what we believe God would have us to do in shaping our children?

It sounds as if the coach draws on what's inside a couple's heart rather than offering "outside" solutions.

Exactly right. He or she is simply helping the couple to catch and clarify *their own vision*, or to discern *God's vision*. It's all about questioning, probing, digging, prodding, clarifying, challenging.

You don't worry so much about the whys, the dynamics and inter-workings, or about your experience growing up. You focus instead on the vision of what you want. What is it that you believe God's called you to? What's it going to take to get there? What needs to change? What do you need to learn? What books do you need to read? What resources do you need to access? What rules may need to change?

Everything is about what, not why. As a couple begins to take action, the insight often follows.

The coach is looking inside the person and saying, "Let's listen for, scripturally speaking, the desires of your heart. Let's listen for your natural strength, your God-given passions. Let's listen for the indications of calling upon your life." The point is to look inside the couple and collect all the different disjointed pieces of self, and say, "Wow, look at the bigger picture of what these could be in the way you live your life and do marriage and family."

Can this be a challenge when dealing with a couple's personality differences?

Definitely. Coaching is highly individualized, helping the couple hear themselves and each other, and to hear God more clearly; so that they all get on the same page.

It helps them recognize where they're different, and oftentimes where they're more similar than they realize.

A TYPICAL COACHING SESSION

HOW OFTEN: A couple will usually contract with a coach on a monthly basis rather than session to session. The sessions average three times a month, for between a half hour to an hour.

PRE-SESSION PREP: The day before each session, the couple will e-mail to their coach a prep form. This form lets the coach know what the couple has done since the last session, what they're struggling with, and what they need/want to focus on in the next call. "This brings everybody up to speed" says McCluskey, "so they know before the session begins what they're going to be concentrating on."

MODE OF COMMUNICATION: Most coaching is done over the phone, which makes it more convenient. Couples don't have to arrange babysitting, take time off work, drive across town, sit in a lobby.

"I'm working with a couple in another state," says McCluskey. "The husband is at the office and the wife is at home. They e-mail the prep form the day before. We all meet for a half hour over a conference call, hang up the phone, and everybody goes right back to what they were doing. It's really convenient."—GK

Together they try to catch a clearer vision for what *they* want *their* marriage and family to be.

Are couples impacted spiritually through coaching?

Usually as we coach around issues, we unmask areas where there's tremendous opportunity for spiritual growth. So the couple is growing in terms of their practical physical vision, and simultaneously God is stretching them, and they're growing deeper intimacy with each other and with God.

Any time you see growth in one area, it often impacts growth in other areas. Couples don't usually come to me saying, "We'd like you to coach us around spiritual growth." Instead, through the natural turn of coaching, they begin to recognize that they're growing spiritually more than they have in years. They're talking more openly. They're journaling. They're praying more frequently.

So it's important to find a Christian life or couples coach.

Extremely. From a Christian perspective, we speak of discovering or discerning a vision for your life because God says, "I know the plans I have for you" or "I knew you before I knit you together in your mother's womb" or "The gifts and the call of the Lord are irrevocable." All of these Scriptures say there are treasures placed directly inside each one of us, and the Christian coach can help you discern what those are. It's looking to get clearer on what God called you to, how God gifted you, what God's vision is. It's really exciting to walk with a couple who have a solid foundation and watch them move more fully into the joy, peace, contentment, and fulfillment of God's design for their marriage and family.

mp

Want more information?

Check out these websites:

- Coaching for Christian Living christian-living.com
- Christian Coaches Network (CCN) christiancoaches.com
- International Coach Federation (ICF) coachfederation.org

The Soul of Sex

BETHANY TORODE

It may have been Victorian prudishness, although I was looking forward to lovemaking and had enjoyed a number of open discussions with my fiancé. Or maybe it was my romantic sensibilities. But when someone gave me the classic evangelical sex guide *Intended for Pleasure*, I could skim only a few pages before setting it aside.

Looking at similar books (Tim and Beverly LaHaye's *The Act of Marriage*, Dr. Cliff and Joyce Penner's *The Gift of Sex*) confirmed my dislike of the genre. When I was engaged, the notion of having a Christian sex manual in my bedroom seemed analogous to landing on a beautiful deserted island, only to be met on shore by a previous explorer with a detailed map. I didn't want to read the books because I didn't want to kill the joy of discovery.

Now that I've been married a few years, and have also listened to the struggles of married friends, I've mellowed out a little. I see the need for Christian sex therapy, and I respect the courage of those authors who have braved offending the CBA market by writing about sex.

Still, most of the evangelical sex guides lack soul. They focus mainly on technique (at times reading like *Cosmo* columns with Bible verses tacked on) at the expense of the deeper realities of which sexuality is an expression. I doubted that any such book could aptly capture the meaning of lovemaking—until I read *When Two Become One*, by Christopher and Rachel McCluskey.

The McCluskeys understand and speak to the inextrica-

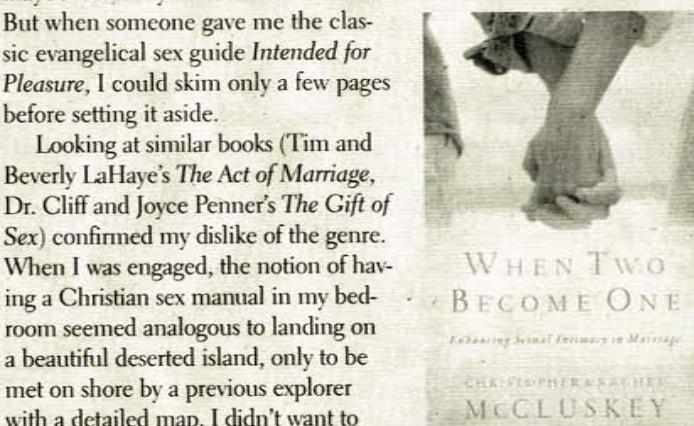
ble connection between body and spirit. "There is a world of difference between having sex and truly making love," they write. "The phrases are used interchangeably and, indeed, the acts themselves are the same. But the spirit of making love is entirely different from simply having sex."

They view sex as a form of communication, an exchange between persons (hence the term "intercourse"). So it's natural that they focus on what's being communicated. It's at this deeper level, they contend, that most sexual problems and frustrations begin. And they can only be cured at the source—in the soul.

Most of the book is devoted to discussing the spiritual state of your marriage, which becomes manifest, for good or ill, in physical intimacy. The McCluskeys primarily address communication problems and sexual and theological misunderstandings. They also suggest some beautiful ways to increase intimacy. "Many people find it extremely difficult to look into their spouse's eyes as they kiss, and even more difficult as they actually begin to make love. . . . But if we are willing, we can peer into the soul of our mate through their eyes as we become one."

Their language is candid without being crude (unlike another of the evangelical sex guides, which relies on terms such as "Mr. Happy"). They avoid the degrading lingo that most people, Christians or otherwise, default to in discussions of sex. While mechanistic language has invaded discussions of all areas in life, including sexuality, the McCluskeys protect the dignity of the person as a physical/spiritual whole.

Although they comfortably use medical language when needed, the McCluskeys' words are mostly reminiscent of the poetic-yet-explicit imagery in the Song of Songs. Showing their own romantic sensibilities, they conclude the book with a lengthy and beautiful quote from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, part of which reads: "It is impossible that this sacred festival of destiny should not send a celestial radiation to the infinite. . . . When two mouths, made sacred by love, draw near each other to create, it is impossible that above that ineffable kiss there should not be a thrill in the immense mystery of the stars."



Christopher is a licensed counselor and sex therapist, so at times the book feels like a counseling session (in a good way). Each chapter begins with a character sketch of a marriage from Christopher's casework, and the stories resonate, touching on issues all couples struggle through. My cheeks flushed as I saw my own mistakes woven through others' experiences. But the book's gentle tone makes this bearable.

My one quibble is that I wish the McCluskeys had discussed fertility. An overview of the female fertility cycle (and its effects on moods and desire) can be invaluable for both husbands and wives. Also, some discussion on how hormonal contraceptives alter a woman (and hence affect the marriage relationship) would be a plus. Many of my young Christian friends have gone on the Pill, and it's been the source of unnecessary (and sometimes extreme) emotional, physical, and marital problems. As Dr. Richard Fehring of Marquette University writes, "Fertility is a good, being a whole person is a good, and integrating one's fertility is an essential component of wholeness." In my own marriage, grappling with my fertility (instead of suppressing it) has tremendously helped my husband's verbal and sexual communication skills.

"Christians ought to be the most sexually fulfilled people on the planet," the McCluskeys write. "That doesn't necessarily mean the most sexually active or the most sexually varied in their practices, but simply the most sexually fulfilled." Their book will help this become a reality in many marriages. It's an invaluable resource for pastors and priests doing marital counseling, especially since it lays a clear, solid theological foundation in the first few chapters. I've been giving it as a wedding gift (though, like me, I suspect most couples won't fully appreciate its wisdom until they've had a year or two to allow problems to surface).

With this book, the McCluskeys have set a new standard for the genre. Much more than a manual, *When Two Become One* speaks to and about the holy longing in each of us, a longing for God in our physical experience of each other.

B&C

Bethany Torode lives with her husband Sam and their two sons in South Wayne, Wisconsin. She is a frequent contributor to Boundless webzine.

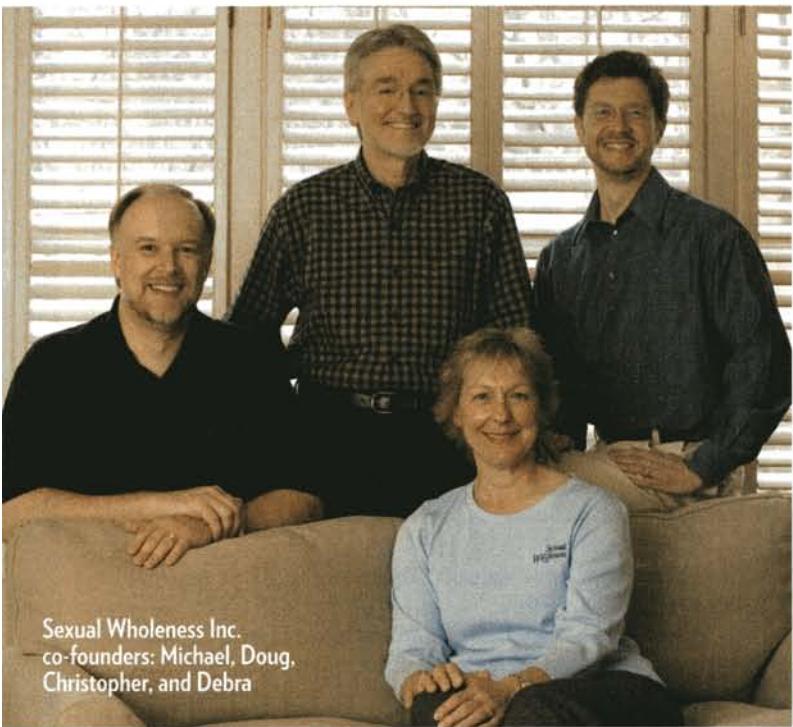
When Two Become One

Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage

CHRISTOPHER AND RACHEL MCCLUSKEY • REVELL, 2004 • 192 PP. • \$19.95

spirituality What 4 Christian sex therapists wish you knew and sex?

by Ginger Kolbaba



Sexual Wholeness Inc.
co-founders: Michael, Doug,
Christopher, and Debra

"Welcome to Atlanta!" Michael Sytsma, one of the Christian sex therapists I'd flown in to interview, greeted me at the airport, holding out a small, white paper bag.

"Thanks," I said, noticing that wrapped delicately within the folds of fire-engine red tissue paper was a white feather.

"That's for you and your husband," he continued.

"Uh-oh, I thought, almost afraid to unveil the other contents. *Let it just be chocolates.* I had no idea what to expect. This was a sex therapist, after all.

Indeed, there were mini Hershey bars and heart-shaped goodies... along with two tea lights, the feather, and five packets of lubricant gel.

We hear about "myths" of sex. What do you wish couples knew about their sex life?

Debra: Every couple except maybe one or two in the entire universe will have sexual problems at some point in their marriage. Anyone who tells you otherwise is misleading you.

Doug: I tell my male clients, "Guys, I've got good news and bad news." The bad news is everyone here is going to suffer from three major issues at some point: impotence, premature

"I think you'll like the warming one. But the mango orange is nice, too," Michael told me nonchalantly. "There's even one that's sugar free."

"Whew, that's good, since I'm on the South Beach diet," I said, trying to sound just as casual, even though I was mentally wide-eyed. Right then I knew this would be no ordinary interview.

You never know what to expect when you get in a room with sex therapists. One thing is certain—you're going to talk about sex. But in the case of these four profound and deeply committed Christians, you're also going to talk a whole lot about God. Combine the two topics, and you get one fascinating dialogue.

In the mid-1990s Doug Rosenau, Michael Sytsma, Christopher McCluskey, and Debra Taylor—each working in private practice across the country—found one another. Realizing the need to stick together in a field that had few Christian sex therapists ("We could just about count them on two hands!" Debra says), they founded Sexual Wholeness, Inc. (SWI), a multi-functional organization devoted to training and certifying professional Christian therapists in the area of sexual healing.

One of their greatest passions has been to create a "theology of sexuality"—a biblical, practical, Christ- and Christian-honoring understanding of sex.

Now, more than a decade later, they've counseled or trained thousands of individuals and couples.

"There is no area of our being in which we can become more deeply wounded than our sexuality," explains Christopher McCluskey. "And within marriage, there's no area in which you can minister to a couple and bring greater healing and stability than in their shared sexuality. You'll impact both their intimacy together and their individual sense of wholeness as male and female, created in the image of God, reflecting Christ and his bride, the church. If you get a Christian couple on the same page with God's vision for marital intimacy, you'll have poured super glue over that marriage, and you'll have a beautiful picture of the relationship God desires to have with us."

After meeting the Sexual Wholeness professionals, I was overwhelmed by how fun they were. They're witty, smart, empathetic, and passionate about helping people discover God's unique and wonderful gift of sex. Not to mention they have some solid insights on how to have a great sex life. Here's what they shared with MP.

ejaculation, and delayed ejaculation. The good news is there are ways to work through those, so don't spend so much time fretting over them.

Debra: One of my favorite verses is Psalm 34:19: "A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all." That's a great theme for a couple. You'll have sexual problems. Don't be surprised. Seek the Lord and get counsel. God will rescue you—not always the way you want

him to, but there are ways to work through it. Get over it. Move on.

Doug: Sex is complex, and a variety of things weave together to create a good sex life. So many of my clients expect a neat cause and effect, as if they're dealing with a case of appendicitis. They think, *Let's take out the appendix*. Sex isn't typically that simplistic.

For instance, a wife may say, "I don't enjoy sex." I tell her and her husband, "Maybe it's not the sex. Maybe you're not a night person, and he prefers to make love at night. You've got two children under the age of three. Maybe recently you were suffering from endometriosis." I wish couples would understand that when there's an issue, sometimes it's better to see the complexity of it, rather than reducing it to *we need to make love more often*. God has designed sex to be physical, emotional, and spiritual, so it would do wonders for their sex life if they'd consider how those elements interact.

Michael: Another myth is that great sex should be natural and should happen easily. Here's the truth: *great sex doesn't*

"What can I do?" or "How far can I go?" are the wrong questions. "How can I help my spouse become sexually whole?"—that's a good question.

Christopher: Go to the spirit of the act. When Christ was confronted with people who wanted to know, *What's the boundary? What's the rule?* invariably he cut through all the "surface" questions, all the rules, and went to the core, which is the spirit of the act.

Although sex is physical, it's an emotional connection of souls, and it is a spiritual act. *Every single act* of sexual intercourse is an act of worship. The question is, *Who is being worshiped? Who is being glorified through this act? Is it glorifying God or is it glorifying the enemy?* You cannot engage in a sexual act and not have it connect to the spiritual realm. It's impossible.

The apostle Paul tells us: "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship" (Romans 12:1). We offer our bodies in spiritual worship through our singing, our praise, our teaching, our

EVERY SINGLE ACT OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP. THE QUESTION IS, WHO IS BEING WORSHIPPED?

happen for many couples until they've been married 30 years or so, and they've learned each other and themselves.

Really? Thirty years?

Michael: When couples are first married, they have the tendency to believe that sex is body focused, that it's about how big your penis is or your breasts are. But it isn't. It's about the heart. Great sex is heart sex.

Christopher: The big O is not orgasm. The big O is *oneness*. It's not how great the bodies, how great the orgasm. It's, *Was that a loving experience where you shared with each other? Was it contributing to your oneness?*

Michael: So many people think sex is about the pleasure, which it is, but it isn't. Or about the act itself, which it is, but it isn't. Sex reflects something far grander, far more beautiful. The problem is that people want to look more at the details.

What do you mean?

Debra: What's okay and isn't okay in the bedroom.

Christopher: One of the most damaging myths is the notion that anything the Christian husband and wife agree to sexually is okay or is somehow going to be blessed by God. This idea that everything you do within the marriage bed, as long as the rings are on and it's with the one you chose, is okay.

You're talking about the verse in Hebrews?

Christopher: Right. In Hebrews 13:4 the writer says the marriage bed should be kept pure and undefiled. But I know Christians who take that verse and cheapen it in order to justify whatever they want to do. It's a huge distortion of Scripture, of the freedom we have in Christ.

So then what is and isn't okay in the bedroom?

Michael: That's really the wrong question to ask.

It is?

Doug: It's about intimacy and connecting. You need to ask, *Is what I want to do selfish? Is it giving? Is it loving?*

hands through service. Our bodies are a living sacrifice offered every day in various physical expressions of spiritual glorification of God. When we offer our bodies in sexual union, it is a spiritual act of worship, but we can blaspheme just as surely as we can glorify.

This feels like your theology of sexuality.

Doug: It is. Why did God create sex? To reveal his love and his creativity. To reveal himself.

Debra: We're basically talking about how to live out the Word of God. What is the truth God has about sexuality? How do you live that out for Jesus?

Christopher: Couples tell me, "But we love each other, so we should be able to do what we want." I encourage them to say, "Okay, God is love, capital L. So we must capital L love each other. We're going to express the One who is Love through this union."

So, for instance, let's say a husband wants his wife to have sex with another person. You can use scriptural principles to prove it's wrong. The wife can say, "Honey, this is not okay because Scripture says not to do that." He says, "Yeah, but I'm just fantasizing about it." She can respond, "Then let's look at the spirit of the act. If that's what you're thinking about as the two of us are becoming one, and God hears and knows all, what is this act communicating to him?" I think the average couple can go, *Huh, I never thought about it that way before.*

Swinging is an extreme example, but you're saying no matter what's in question, go to the heart issue.

Michael: Once couples understand the heart of sexuality, they aren't concerned with those detail questions of *How far can I go?* and *What can we and can we not do?* So many Christians are stuck on those boundary questions—Is it okay to have oral sex with your wife?

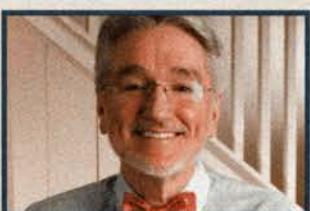
Doug: The husband needs to think, *This behavior is truly okay, but am I violating my wife's spirit by asking her to do something she's uncomfortable with?* It's not as simple as saying oral sex is okay. It may be okay, but not right now,

Who's Who

Besides being certified Christian sex therapists and counselors in private practice, these co-founders of Sexual Wholeness, Inc., have several other diversified interests:



Christopher McCluskey
Certified Christian life coach.
Co-author with his wife, Rachel,
of *When Two Become One: Embracing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*. Married 21 years.
Christian-living.com



Doug Rosenau
Ordained minister and one of the first certified Christian sex therapists. Has practiced in the field for 30 years. Author of the best-selling book *A Celebration of Sex*. Married to Cathy 21 years.



Michael Sytsma
Ordained minister and founder of Building Intimate Marriages, Inc.
Married to Karen for 21 years.
IntimateMarriage.org



Debra Taylor
One of the first women Christian sex therapists, practicing in the field for 19 years. Co-author of *Secrets of Eve*. Married to Kent 29 years.

because you're violating your wife's or your husband's spirit by selfishly pushing that behavior in the present lovemaking. But it's equally selfish to be inhibited about permissible pleasures.

Michael: Let's take oral sex, for example. Research points out that oral sex has reached the point in our culture where it's almost as accepted as intercourse.

In our field, we see that people aren't asking the question, "Is oral sex okay?" anymore. That doesn't come up nearly as often as, "Is anal sex okay?" Our fear is that culture is leading what is and what isn't acceptable in Christian marriages, and that's wrong. Just because birth control, different positions, different acts are okay in culture does not mean that they're okay before God.

But there are Christians who will manipulate that.

Christopher: The Christian husband who comes into my office and says, "We're here because you're a Christian counselor and my wife is withholding herself from me. I want you to address this from the Scriptures and instruct her that she's in sin because her body is not her own."

Does he have scriptural basis for every argument he's making? Yes. Is he right? No. He's totally missed the spirit of the act, though he could back up every point with Scripture. I tell him, "Everything you're saying may be right by the letter of the law, but it's so far from the spirit of the law that you're the one who's in sin, because you've totally missed the spirit. And if you force your wife to submit to you in giving you her body, Satan will be glorified through what you do."

Doug: Scripture clearly teaches against necrophilia. Scripture clearly teaches against incest. Scripture clearly teaches against bestiality. Let's just take those three. They're spoken against in Old Testament law. But I've had people say, "But if I follow Old Testament law, I can't kiss my wife during her period. And I don't hear anybody teaching that one's wrong. If we live in an age of grace, and we're able to throw out any of those rules, why can't we throw out all of those rules?" It's easy to manipulate and twist Scripture; it's really difficult to manipulate and twist the *heart* of it once you capture that.

Michael: Which is why I think Jesus always went to the heart of the issue when nailed with specific questions.

So we shouldn't ask boundary questions?

Doug: It's more complex than the boundary question someone may be asking. That per-

son is asking, "Can I do this and not sin?" And I'm saying, "The heart's sinning in even asking the question."

Michael: That person's asking a question that comes out of his or her sin, and so we have to address the sin that causes the question to be asked. I can't even answer the question; it's invalid because of where that person's heart is.

Debra: We need to deal with the heart. Then that original question is no longer important.

You talk about worshiping God through sex. How can couples embrace that idea?

Christopher: Connect it to the scriptural principle of feasts. In the Old Testament God ordained feasts to celebrate his glory. What's a feast? It's eating sumptuous foods, drinking fine wines. If you do that without the right spirit, you get gluttony and drunkenness, and God is certainly not going to be worshipped. But if you worship in a feast while still having discipline, still having boundaries, God says he's greatly glorified.

Marital union is meant to be a feast—look at the Song of Songs. There's so much metaphor that is about feasting and fine wines and good rich foods. See it as another type of bodily feast as the two "consume" each other. It's the consummation of their oneness. They offer themselves for consumption, and God is glorified.

Doug: And that requires making sure couples give themselves permission to learn those disciplines—the discipline of feasting, of playfulness, of sensuality—and give themselves permission to be erotic, to be truly naked and unashamed.

Michael: A couple can really drink in and enjoy each other. But that means they have to slow down. They have to tune in to the sensuality of it, which is part of the beauty of it all.

That's difficult to do.

Michael: Yes. That's why it takes some 30 to 35 years to have great sex.

Doug: A practical way to talk about the discipline of partying and celebrating is Jesus telling us to be childlike. For my granddaughter, play is a way of life. Being childlike is not just about faith. Jesus is talking about that ability to be naked and unashamed. To cavort, to frolic, to laugh and have awe and wonder and anticipation. Oftentimes a couple is more childlike in their dating experience than they are in their marriage. I'm not talking sexually. I'm talking about the creativity and planning little treats and surprises for each other.

Christopher: Play replenishes. But the problem is that we either turn our play into a part-time job and wring all the fun out of it, or it's vegetative escape, entertainment, amusement.

Debra: Which is not play.

Michael: It doesn't feed the soul. It doesn't replenish.

Doug: Playfulness really is an important part of spirituality. We've lost that.

Debra: Relaxing, refreshing, recreating. There are a lot of couples struggling, and part of it is they've lost the joy of just being together sexually and intimately.

Christopher: A paradigm shift has to occur first that says it's not only *okay* to play; it's *important* to play. It's wrong if I don't play. A lot of couples, when they get to their forties or so, have a midlife crisis. They go off and have an affair because it's somebody to "play with." They recapture a spirit of play, but it's childish instead of

Comfort sex can be worshipful sex.

Debra: Oh, yes.

Quickie sex can be worshipful sex?

Debra: Yes, yes.

Christopher: Because we're talking about making love, not simply having sex, and it's flowing out of the rest of the spirit of the marriage. If they've been playful throughout the day, with little kitchen hugs, and notes in the lunch, or phone calls, or e-mails, or anything that is playful and loving—not necessarily sexual—then it naturally connects.

Doug: Structured optimal time for sex, such as every Friday night, can be worshipful like going to church from 10:30 to 12:00 on Sunday morning. But if all we have is structured time with God and never just hang out and "waste" time with him, we're probably never going to have the worship we'd like.

IT'S NOT ONLY OKAY TO PLAY; IT'S IMPORTANT TO PLAY.

childlike. Right idea; wrong direction. They recognized they were starving, but didn't understand where the real food could be found.

How can a couple rediscover that childlike play?

Christopher: Ask yourself, *What puts my spouse in the most playful moods?* I've had women say, "You know, I've noticed when I get him away from home, away from the office, when we're in a car, he talks. He'll talk and talk and talk. What's that about?" Get him in different contexts.

Michael: Part of what I teach couples is they've got to set aside some sacred time and let nothing encroach upon it. That creates a bubble of safety they can relax and play in. But we have such a mindset in our society of, *Okay, I flipped a switch and I can be there.* No, you can't. That's not how we're created.

My son collects lizards. You can't get much stupider than a lizard. I mean there's not much brain there. And they play. They have so much fun just chasing each other around. And I think, *What kind of a God instills play in such a base creature?* That says something about God. And I watch when they do and don't play. They play when their tummies are full and when the heat's right and it's a safe environment. Then they start chasing each other just for the fun of it. And I think, *Well, we can't expect couples just to go in and say, "Okay, it's eight o'clock, it's our playtime."*

Christopher: "I got candles lit. I drew a bubble bath."

Yet we talk about scheduling sex.

Michael: That's important to do, but we can't expect all of that to happen at the same time. There are times we schedule sex because it's nurturing and we have to discipline it. But we also need times that we just relax and revel in it, that we get away for a weekend. And it takes 36 hours before we're relaxed enough and calm enough that we can look at each other and say, "Hey, you're kind of cute. Want to go play?"

So just to bring this all back around. Playful sex can be worshipful sex?

Debra: Oh, yeah.

Michael: Very highly.

Sometimes you have to do more than that 15 minutes or 45 minutes and have that wasting time together. It's all worshipful, but sometimes to get the connecting, intimate worship, you've got to do the extended time, too.

This is a paradigm shift, which means we can't expect things to change overnight.

Michael: I tell couples it took 40 years of wandering in the desert to teach the Hebrews a lesson. Why do you think you're going to learn it overnight? Some things are more difficult than that. It takes awhile to sink through our thick, sin-filled skulls.

When the goal becomes oneness, the sex gets really cool. But if you make really cool sex the goal, you destroy it all.

For 30 minutes last week, I helped a husband caress his wife's hand and then tell me what he was experiencing. It started with, "Well, I feel her skin." And after a bit, it became, "I can feel blood vessels and maybe nerves." After about ten minutes he said, "These are the hands that touch my face. These are the hands that care for my kids. These are the . . ." He started to go from just the sensations, which were important, to the *meaning* in those hands. And tears began to stream down her face as he was really beginning to experience her.

When we finished, I said, "Hands are the least intimate part of your body. This is the part you'll let anybody touch. But what if you start doing that with all of her body?" How intimate that becomes when you start tuning into the more sacred parts of the body. And is that sexual? Very much so.

Doug: One of the church fathers, Jean Pierre de Caussade, talked about the sacrament of the present moment. Michael gave that couple a gift of a sacrament, of truly tuning in, in ways that we don't take time to do.

Christopher: And the cool thing is that they'll wind up with a far better sex life because they've learned how to make love.

Doug: Which is the point. Great sex becomes ancillary; it's not the goal. We really believe that when you truly learn to tune into God, you're going to tune into each other. And you'll end up with a great sex life.

mp

For more information on Sexual Wholeness, Inc., to contact Michael, Doug, Debra, or Christopher, or to find a certified Christian sex therapist in your area, visit www.SexualWholeness.com.

Can This Marriage Be Saved... by God?



Joyce Meyer, an evangelical minister and author of *Help Me: I'm Married!*

The Bible, says Meyer, tells us "to be makers and maintainers of peace." There are some things that are worth standing your ground over (like fundamental values) and some that aren't (like your husband's horrendously paired outfits). "If you are walking in love, you don't have to mention every little thing your partner does wrong," she believes.

Ed Young, a senior pastor and author of *Kid CEO: How to Keep Your Children From Running Your Life*

Our culture has "put kids in the corner office," making them the center of the universe, Young believes. But when couples orbit their kids' lives, they lose track of each other. The Bible says the couple's relationship should come first, says Young. Only when this relationship takes priority can the family flourish.

Virginia Todd Holeman, Ph.D., author of *Reconcilable Differences: Hope and Healing for Troubled Marriages* and a licensed family therapist and an associate dean at a theological seminary

"More marriages erode than explode," says Dr. Holeman. What takes time to fall apart also takes time to put back together. After trust has

Need a higher authority than a therapist to keep your marriage strong? These best-selling authors show how faith can lead the way **BY TRICIA O'BRIEN**

been shattered, reconciliation involves the recognition that you cannot go back to the way things used to be. Rather, "it requires two people committed to the hard work of restoring love and truth and trustworthiness to their relationship," says Dr. Holeman.

Charlotte Kasl, Ph.D., a therapist and the author of *If the Buddha Married: Creating Enduring Relationships on a Spiritual Path*

Relationships are always in flux, as is life, in the Buddhist view, and only by letting go of fixed expectations of others' behavior are we able to live in the present moment. We stop saying things like "But you used to like it that way" or "We've always done it this way." Instead, "Who are you now?" becomes the relationship-building question we ask each day.

Esther Jungreis, a rabbi and the author of *The Committed Marriage: A Guide to Finding a Soul Mate and Building a Relationship Through Timeless Biblical Wisdom*

"There are two ways of looking at every situation," says Jungreis. "You can see light or darkness, blessing or curse. You can choose to be considerate or bitter, patient or angry, loving

or critical. It all depends on how you train your eye." Your decision to "use your good eye," she holds in her book, can determine the health of your union.

Gary Thomas, author of *Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy?*

Thomas believes it is important to accept that marriage is difficult and says that once you do, it's easier to deal with the challenges. "The difficulty shapes us as people, it enlarges our soul, it develops our character," he says. Where does holiness come in? Thomas says that marital conflicts should be viewed as a call to change yourself rather than your spouse. In other words, relationship difficulties give you an opportunity to grow closer to God, and to each other.

Christopher and Rachel McCluskey, coauthors of *When Two Become One: Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*

"Being sexual is an act of worship. It is part of God's original design and if it is of love, it is of God," say the McCluskeys. In that light, making love may be a good way to resolve a disagreement. "Sometimes conflicts look different after making love," explain the authors. The caveat: It doesn't work if you're up against a serious disagreement or a trust issue, or if your marriage is characterized by anger, hatred, criticism, neglect or disdain. ♦



Tackling a taboo

By Cameron Conant

Books on sex are increasingly front-and-center at Christian retail

Once relegated to the back shelves of Christian retail stores, books about sexuality have shed their brown-bag stigma. For evidence, look no further than February's release of *Sex God* (\$19.99, Zondervan), the provocatively titled and highly anticipated second book from Rob Bell.

It's a far cry from almost a decade ago when publishers were nervous to even use the word "sex" in their book titles, according to Lyn Cryderman, vice president and publisher at Zondervan.

In 1998, Zondervan published an updated edition of *The Act of Marriage* by Tim and Beverly LaHaye, a steady seller

since its debut in the 1970s and a book Cryderman described as "explicit." Yet, the title only hinted at what the book was about.

The title "doesn't really tell you it's about sex," Cryderman said. "I'm sure the publisher at the time struggled with how to title a book about sex, while making it something people would want to take to the counter."

Until the late 1990s, there was what Cryderman called the "brown-bag factor"—that is, "no self-respecting Christian would want to walk up to the counter with a book with the word 'sex' on the cover," he said.

"But then people learned that the world had changed," Cryderman added. "The media had become much more explicit, and publishers needed to be a lot more honest and open on a subject that was important to virtually every human being."

For Lonnie Hull DuPont, director of acquisitions for Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group, the content of Christian sex books hasn't changed all that much in the last 20 years, but other things have. DuPont remembers listening to an Ed Wheat record in the early '80s where he gave a lecture based on his book, *Intended for Pleasure* (Revell).

"I was blushing," DuPont said. "Today, the content of these books isn't

that different; there's just more of it. It's packaged differently, and the audience has expanded. It's not just for married people now—not that attitudes (within the Christian community) have changed in the sense that single people should now have sex—but there's more dialogue going on about sex."

Dave McShea, marketing manager for Parable Group, agreed.

"I think that the topic has always been pretty frank and open," McShea said. "Look at how long *The Act of Marriage* or *Intended for Pleasure* have been around and selling, and they are very clear and frank books."

"There probably are more authors (today) who are willing to tackle the subject, and there have been some unique titles like *Red Hot Monogamy* and *Sheet Music*, and I think *Sex God* will challenge some people. It is a very unique book."

Sex guide sales

The top-selling Christian books addressing sexual issues last year were:

1. *Sheet Music*, Dr. Kevin Leman (Tyndale House, 2003)
2. *Intended for Pleasure*, Ed Wheat, M.D., & Gaye Wheat (Revell, 1977)
3. *Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is)*, Joshua Harris (Multnomah, 2005)
4. *The Purity Principle*, Randy Alcorn (Multnomah, 2003)
5. *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, John Piper and Justin Taylor (Good News/Crossway, 2005)
6. *Not Even a Hint*, Joshua Harris (Multnomah, 2003)
7. *Honey I Don't Have a Headache Tonight*, Sheila Wray Gregoire (Kregel, 2004)
8. *Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is)*, A Study Guide for Women, Shannon & Beverly LaHaye (Zondervan, 2005)

- Joshua Harris, with Brian Smith (Multnomah, 2005)
- 9. *Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is): A Study Guide for Men***, Joshua Harris, with Brian Smith (Multnomah, 2005)
- 10. *Someone I Love Is Gay***, Anita Worthen and Bob Davies (InterVarsity Press, 1996)
- 11. *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood***, John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Good News/Crossway, 1991)
- 12. *Not Even a Hint: A Study Guide for Men***, Joshua Harris, with Brian Smith (Multnomah, 2004)
- 13. *What's the Difference?***, John Piper (Good News/Crossway, 1990)
- 14. *When Two Become One (hardcover)***, Christopher & Rachel McCluskey (Revell, 2004)
- 15. *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage***, Wilian Cutrer, M.D., and Sandra Glahn (Kregel, 2001)
- 16. *When Two Become One (softcover)***, Christopher & Rachel McCluskey (Revell, 2004)
- 17. *Not Even a Hint: A Study Guide for Women***, Shannon & Joshua Harris, with Brian Smith (Multnomah, 2004)
- 18. *The Invisible Bond***, Barbara Wilson (Multnomah, 2006)
- 19. *Coming Out of Homosexuality***, Bob Davies and Lori Rentzel (InterVarsity Press, 1993)
- 20. *Sex 101***, Clifford & Joyce Penner (W Publishing Group, 2003)

List based on sales for Christian Living/Relationships/Sexual category according to the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association STATS (Sales Tracking Analysis Trends Summary) data for the year ending Dec. 29, 2006.

INTERNET IMPACT

Every Man's Battle (WaterBrook) by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker dramatically expanded the number of Christians openly talking about sex. The book, published in 2000, deals candidly with masturbation, pornography and sexual temptation for men—single or married.

And, perhaps, most significantly for retailers, the book proved once and for all that sex books could be more than just steady backlist sellers. The "Every Man" franchise, which now includes "Every Woman's" books as well, has spawned more than two-dozen titles, which combined, have sold more than 2.5 million copies.

While the "Every Man's" and "Every Woman's" books don't use the word "sex" in their titles (many do in their subtitles), they do something perhaps more important—they make sex acceptable to talk about in Christian circles.

Every Man's Battle also hit shelves when the Internet was booming. Suddenly, sexual images and information were more accessible than ever before, "which in some ways made the battle (against sexual temptation) more difficult, and men were struggling with it," said Dudley Delffs, vice president and editor-in-chief of the WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group, publisher of the "Every Man's" and "Every Woman's" books.

"Men were mostly struggling alone, maybe connecting in a small group in their churches—but before *Every Man's Battle* the resources were limited," he said.

The resources are seemingly unlimited these days, with Christian books on sexuality available for every group imaginable, including teens, adults, singles and couples. There are how-to sex manuals, books that examine the theology of sex, books for those suffering from sexual addictions, books on lust, books on chastity, books on the emotional impact of sex, books on talking to your teen or child about sex, books for your teen or child on sex and books that tackle provocative sex-related questions.

One such title is the September 2006 release *What You Didn't Learn From Your Parents About Sex: A Guide to a Touchy Subject* by Matthew Paul Turner, published by NavPress. The book is aimed at a college audience and is a humorous, no-holds-barred look at sexuality from a Christian perspective, and one that LifeWay Christian Stores refused to carry due to its mix of sexual and comedic content.

"I wanted to write a book that would talk about sex without making the reader feel completely guilty and without setting the bar so high that you couldn't even approach it," Turner said, noting some books in the Christian community "say you shouldn't even kiss your boyfriend or girlfriend," which Turner sees as a "very unrealistic picture" of dating.

"However, there are godly principles that we as people of faith should be following, but it really comes down to our motives and what's in our heart," he added.

MARKET SENSITIVITY

It takes more than good motives when dealing with a conservative constituency. It takes books that retailers are comfortable with—and few topics are as sensitive in the Christian market as sex.

Even today, with Christian publishers more willing than ever to push the envelope—especially in packaging and titling—some sex books go too far, according to LifeWay, which has 134 Christian bookstores.

Chris Turner, media relations manager

for LifeWay, noted that the retailer has a selection process for choosing books, with questions such as "how theologically rooted is the book?" and "is the content handled discreetly."

Many Christian industry books "go beyond the bounds of communicating the content in a respectful, discreet way," Turner said. LifeWay stores carry a fraction of the books that are available due to sheer volume: "If there are 50 books out there on a topic, we're going to carry 12 of

rized. "I think stores will continue to keep the books displayed and featured in their Love/Marriage category," McShea said.

"There is still sensitivity out there to keep the environment in the store family-friendly, and we have received comments from a few concerned customers that some titles are getting a bit too edgy, so it is something that we do need to keep in mind," he added.

However, most retailers seem to have no problem with carrying sex books—even

SUPPLIER CONTACTS

Contact information for each supplier mentioned in this article is available at www.ChristianRetailing.com.

the January title, *Is That All He Thinks About?: How to Enjoy Great Sex With Your Husband* by Marla Taviano (\$11.99, Harvest House).

SHELF LIFE

Cryderman said that sex books are not only a part of many publishers' frontlists, but make even better backlist titles.

"I expect *Sex God* really to be a best-seller out of the blocks, but generally books that deal with sexuality don't sell great the first year," Cryderman said. "But people are always interested (in sex), which is why they make great backlist books. One of ours that continues to sell for us is *Real Questions, Real Answers About Sex* (by Louis and Melissa McBurney, 2005). This book has about as frank of questions as you'll find anywhere, with very honest, unblushing answers."

Other steady backlist titles include *Intimate Issues* by Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus (WaterBrook); *His Needs, Her Needs* by Willard F. Harley Jr. (Revell); *The Act of Marriage* and *The Act of Marriage After 40* by Tim and Beverly LaHaye (Zondervan); *A Celebration of Sex* by Douglas Rosenau (Nelson Books); *Intended for Pleasure* by Ed Wheat (Revell); *Sex Begins in the Kitchen* by Kevin Leman (Revell); *Sexy Girls* by Hayley DiMarco (Revell); *Sex and the Soul of a Woman* by Paula Rinehart (Zondervan); *Real Sex* by Lauren F. Winner (Brazos); *Wait for Me* by Rebecca St. James (Nelson Books); and *Love, Sex, and Lasting Relationships* by Chip Ingram (Baker).

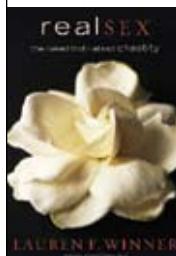
Delffs agreed that sex books are part of a strong backlist and said that *Intimate Issues*, originally published in 1999, stands as proof of that. "It sells several thousand copies per year and has a very low return rate," Delffs said. "Seven years later to be selling several thousand per year? Any publisher's happy with that."

McShea agreed. "(Sex books) are usually not on the best-sellers list(s), but there are consistent sales, and the category continues to be steady," McShea said. "Not huge numbers, but they just sell, and you know they will sell at a very steady rate. They just are not the type of books that jump off to huge sales and then diminish; they just start selling and keep selling."

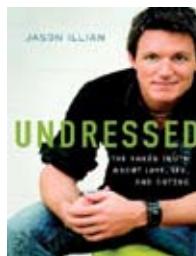
Brian Hampton, senior vice president and publisher of Nelson Books and Nelson Business, said Rosenau's *A Celebration of Sex* has sold 130,000 copies since its release and is still selling, as is St. James' 2002 release *Wait for Me*, which, when combined with sales of its accompanying journal, have sold more than 100,000 copies.

"If a retailer stocks the right titles for their customer base, (books on sex) can certainly be profitable," Hampton said. "Backlist classics and books with a truly novel approach, such as *Every Man's Battle*, do very well." ■

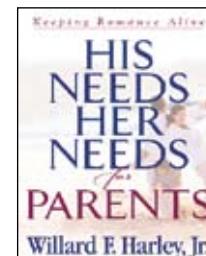
Sex guides



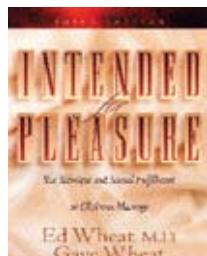
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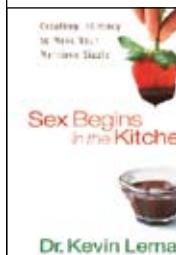
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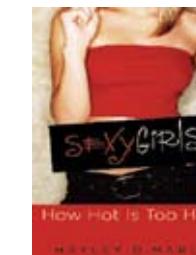
Revell



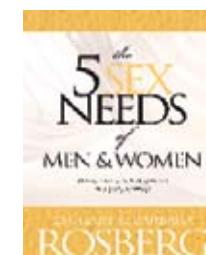
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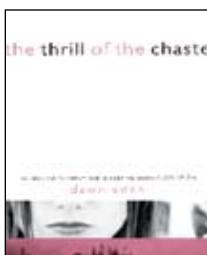
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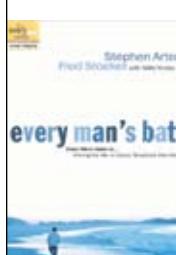
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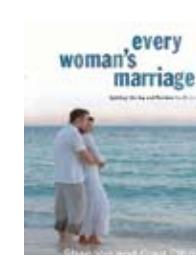
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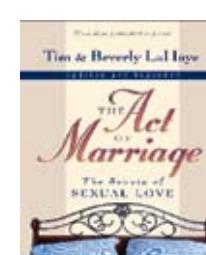
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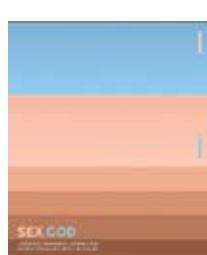
WaterBrook



WaterBrook



Zondervan



Zondervan

them, and we're going to carry ones that are more theologically rooted—ones that lean toward a more conservative interpretation of Scripture."

Like LifeWay, Parable also reviews the books it promotes to make sure the content is appropriate, but that can be tricky when it comes to sex.

"This is a topic that is very difficult to draw the line on. The books have always been frank and open, but some of the topics are getting a few people uncomfortable," McShea said.

"We try to be respectful of this and yet we still need to offer material on the issues that people face. We have had to pass on a few books that were deemed too graphic, but they are the exception rather than the rule. Rob Bell's new book (*Sex God*) is definitely a very edgy title, and I think it has the potential to be a good seller to his audience, and, yet, it may generate some negative comments from others."

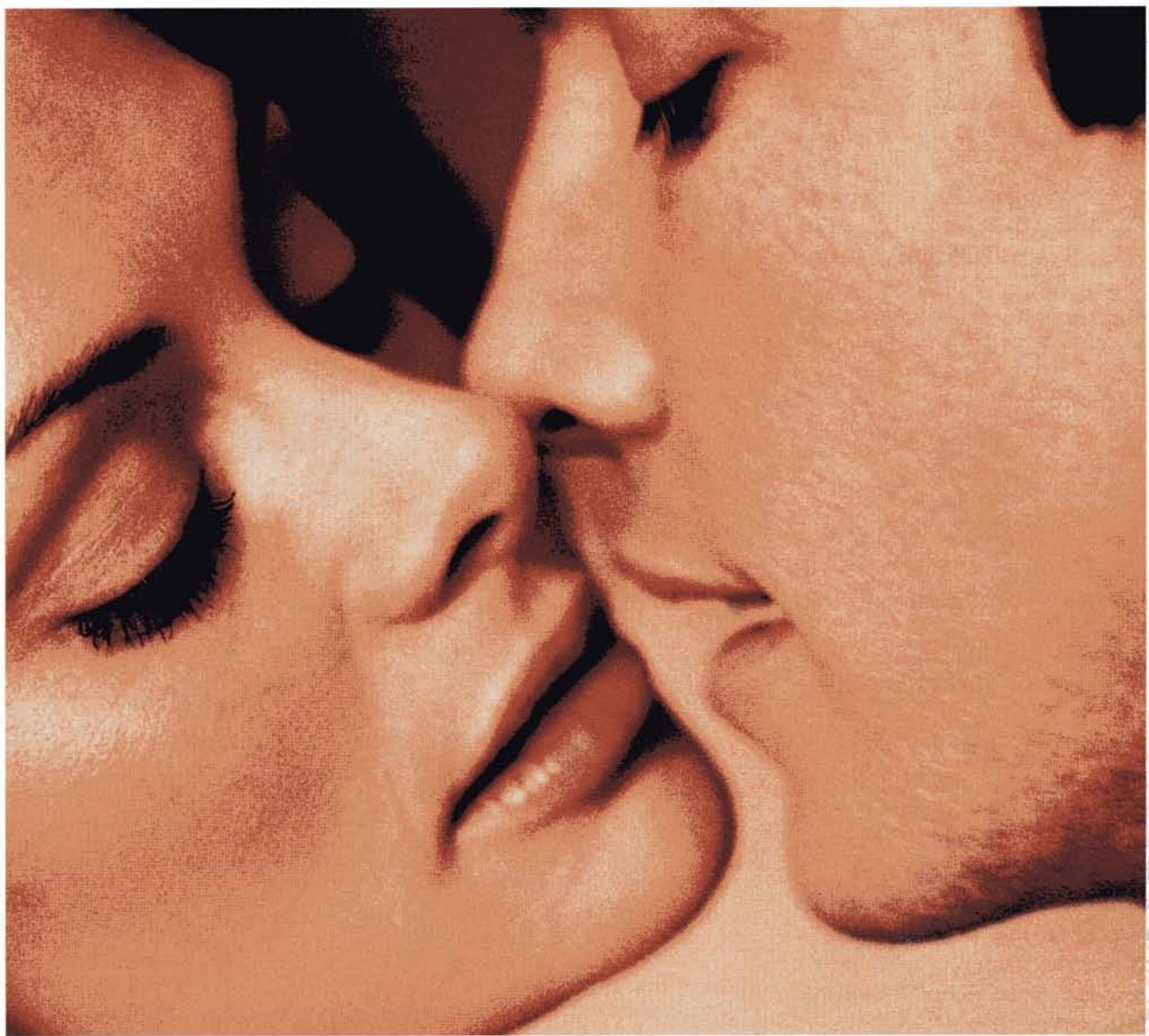
McShea said retailers want to keep stores "family-friendly," which influences how sex books are displayed and catego-

those with edgy titles—unless they articulate views contrary to traditional Christian teachings on sex.

They should have no trouble filling their shelves—within the last six months alone, Zondervan, Thomas Nelson and Tyndale House have all released titles that focus on sexual issues, from *Sex God* to the December 2006 release, *The Thrill of the Chaste* (\$13.99) by Dawn Eden (W Publishing Group).

In October 2006, Tyndale House published *The 5 Sex Needs of Men & Women* (\$22.99) by Gary and Barbara Rosberg, and this month Tyndale will release *The Way to Love Your Wife: Creating Greater Love and Passion in the Bedroom* (\$13.99) by Clifford and Joyce Penner, a re-release of the 2004 book, *The Married Guy's Guide to Great Sex*, which has more than 25,000 copies in print.

Other recent sex titles include the late 2006 book, *Undressed: The Naked Truth About Love, Sex, and Dating* (\$22.99, FaithWords) by speaker and former reality TV show contestant Jason Illian, and



The Spirit

I

don't know which is worse," she cried, "the fact that we hardly ever have sex, or that when we do, I end up feeling used."

Beth and Steve stared at the floor, too embarrassed to look at me but obviously in pain. We'd been making great progress on emotional distance and poor communication in their marriage, but today's session had turned to the topic of their sexual relationship.

"We just don't seem to connect during sex. I know it's supposed to be this wonderful thing, but mostly it just feels like a duty; like I'm servicing him, and he's not really *with* me. I feel so empty afterward. It's gotten to the point that we hardly ever do it at all. We tried to talk about it once with Bill and Mary, the couple that teach our Sunday school class, but Bill just quoted the Scripture about not withholding ourselves from each other. There's got to be more to it than that! I swear, sometimes I wish God hadn't even made sex in the first place!"

A Common Problem

Sexuality is probably the most difficult issue we deal with in marriage counseling, and yet most of us are ill prepared to work effectively with it. This is in spite of numerous studies citing sex as one of the most common causes of marital conflict and divorce. Many counseling programs offer only an introductory course in human sexuality, and many M.Div. programs don't even offer it as an elective. This lack of training results in otherwise skilled Christian counselors unconsciously avoiding the subject, fumbling awkwardly with it, or worse yet, referring to a secular sex therapist who may recommend interventions that are not God-honoring.

Unlike many of our training programs, Scripture addresses sexuality frequently. God knew the power of what he was giving us, for good or for evil. He made it abund-

dantly clear that we are not to misuse the gift, but he also greatly affirmed its frequent enjoyment within the bonds of marriage. He knew it would either be the glue that bonds us together or the dynamite that blows us apart. It is imperative that we become more skilled in working with sexuality so that it becomes that bond for our clients.

The Spirit of the Act

When addressing difficult issues, Jesus repeatedly emphasized the importance of the spirit of an act, rather than simply the letter of the law. If the spirit of an act is wrong, the results will not be glorifying to God... no matter how right the act may appear. God looks on the heart. And so, though it is true that the Word admonishes us not to withhold ourselves from each other, we must be careful not to slap a Scripture verse on a problem that warrants great sensitivity. If we can help bring lasting healing and real growth to a couple's sexual relationship, we will have blessed them with one of God's greatest means of expressing and deepening their love for each other.

Many sexual problems can be resolved simply by helping a couple talk more effectively.

In being careful not to oversimplify sexual problems, we also want to be sure that we don't make them more complex than necessary. Facilitating lasting healing does not necessarily require one to become a sex therapist. Much of the work is an outgrowth of the work we already do—enhancing relational intimacy and encouraging better communication. Many sexual problems can be resolved simply by helping a couple talk more effectively.

This is because, at one level, sexual intercourse is merely a

of the Act

Having Sex or Making Love?

CHRISTOPHER MCCLUSKEY

form of communication. The term *intercourse* is not even a specifically sexual term; it simply means an exchange or communing between persons. We can help a couple look at the messages they are conveying in their *verbal* intercourse throughout the week, pair these with the rest of their *relational* intercourse, and then compare their *sexual* intercourse to see if the messages are consistent. If messages of love, devotion, and oneness are not reflected in the rest of the relationship, their sexual intercourse is a lie. This is why so many spouses feel used and empty after sex; the physical expression of giving oneself completely to the other belies the loneliness and distance that actually characterize their marriage.

Our goal, then, is not simply to help couples have better sex. There is a world of difference between "having

sex" and "making love." Our culture uses the words interchangeably, and the acts are the same, but they are vastly different in spirit. Merely "having sex" does not glorify the Father. Just as we are not to partake of Christ's body through communion in an unworthy manner, we are not to take lightly the joining of our bodies in sexual communion. Simply "having sex" misses the spirit of God's plan for us to celebrate our oneness through a covenant act. We want to help our couples share the true spirit of "making love."

An Intimate Marriage

For a couple to experience that spirit, they must first have an intimate marriage—one in which they are coming to deeply know, and be known by, the other. True sexual *intimacy* is always the

outgrowth and expression of intimacy in the rest of the marriage. We put the cart ahead of the horse if we focus on sexuality when there is still great distance in the rest of the relationship.

But once a couple has established a fairly intimate marriage, we can help each partner more effectively convey and deepen their sexual intimacy. This will require a childlike playfulness on their part. The language will prove awkward at times, and the subject will create some embarrassment, but just as we can only enter the kingdom of heaven as little children, a couple will only find intimate connection sexually when they approach it with childlike wonder and curiosity.

Vulnerability

Part of that child state involves a willingness to soak up one's partner, as well as to fully give of oneself. This again requires healing in the rest of the marriage, since each partner will only be that vulnerable when he or she feels truly safe. Examining the thoughts and feelings each person has during physical, emotional, and spiritual nakedness will reveal lingering areas of mistrust, hurt, anger, and trauma. It is rich ground for continued healing and growth.

To help with some of the awkwardness of discussing sexuality, couples should be encouraged to read a few pages a night together from one of the excellent Christian texts available on healthy sexuality. This will help desensitize them to the topic and provide solid information, which will make productive dialog much easier.

As a couple increasingly views their lovemaking as a means of communicating, try to ensure that nothing is tarnishing the message, whether fantasizing about another, problems with body image and performance, or faulty views of sex as dirty or a necessary evil. Encourage them from Scripture to

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"delight themselves in each other" (Song of Songs 1:2; 4:10) and "enjoy all of their choice fruits" (4:16). This is to be a time of abandon, giving and receiving fully in body, soul, and spirit. Surrendering like this invites a climax that is not merely physical but spiritual as well.

Perhaps the most critical piece of lovemaking is the period of restabilizing immediately after the act is completed. Many couples quickly jump out of bed to go clean up, or simply roll over and go to sleep. Encourage them to spend a few moments basking in the afterglow, soaking in an awareness of what they have shared together. After such a time of transparency and vulnerability, this is a rich opportunity to affirm each other, cuddling, caressing, and soliciting feedback. There are few moments in marriage where we can become so aware of our love.

Summary

We must become more skilled and comfortable in working with sexuality if our clients are to experience the fullness of what God intended in marriage. Our tendency has been toward avoidance, or admonishing from Scripture, without the kind of care and attention we give any other area of marital conflict. If couples cannot come to us for real help and healing, they are left with no good alternatives. Our answers lie not so much in techniques as in understanding the spirit of the act and helping our clients convey that spirit to each other.

Christopher McCluskey, MSW, is a Psychotherapist, Certified Sex Therapist, and Christian Life Coach. A co-founder of Sexual Wholeness, he produced the highly acclaimed video "Coaching Couples into Passionate Intimacy." He can be contacted at his website: www.christian-living.com

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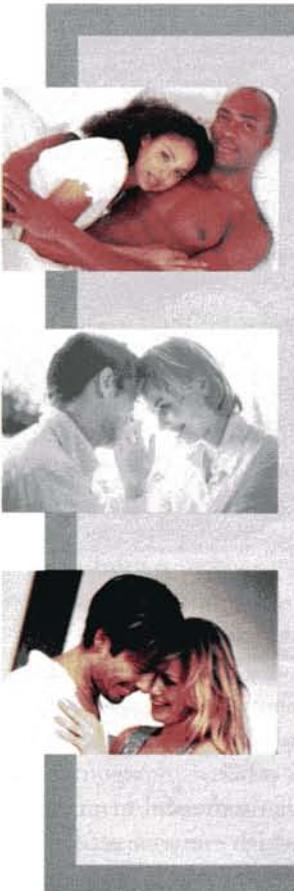
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Resources for Couples

William Cutrer & Sandra Glahn, *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1998).

Archibald Hart, Catherine Hart Weber, & Debra Taylor, *Secrets of Eve* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1998).

Christopher McCluskey, *Coaching Couples into Passionate Intimacy* (video) (Tampa, FL: Media Resource Center, 2000).

Clifford & Joyce Penner, *The Gift of Sex* (Waco, TX: Word, 1981).

Douglas Rosenau, *A Celebration of Sex* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994).

Ed & Gaye Wheat, *Intended for Pleasure* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1977).

Fawning over Flynt film shows twisted values

By CHRISTOPHER McCLUSKEY
Psychotherapist, Clearwater, Florida

"As far as best films go, the nod is to **The People Vs. Larry Flynt...**" the article said. I was sitting in a booth at a restaurant across from my office eating lunch. On each table was a pamphlet entitled "Entertainment Guide - Special Year-End Issue." These were the opening lines of the cover story on the movies they felt would win Academy Awards in February.

I had to read the sentence three times to convince myself of what it said. This was the film that had been forced to redesign advertising posters that pictured actor Woody Harrelson, who plays Flynt, clothed in a diaper and standing in a crucifix position, flanked by a woman in a bikini. The movie had to be cut considerably to gain an R rating instead of the NC-17.

Since that day, the movie has received rave reviews at the Golden Globe Awards.

Many Americans know Larry Flynt as the multimillionaire founder of *Hustler* magazine and its myriad of spinoff hard-core porn magazines. Although he has not had the degree of press exposure given Hugh Hefner, founder of the *Playboy* empire, he is perhaps best known for his highly publicized Supreme Court victory in the 1970s securing First Amendment protection for hard-core pornographers.

By now, in the aftermath of such high-profile sex films as *Showgirls* and *Striptease*, another movie about the sex industry doesn't come as much of a surprise. But there are at least two factors that set **The People Vs. Larry Flynt** in a category by itself in terms of impact for evil in the world.

The first is that the movie has ingeniously targeted the Generation X audience. The casting of Woody Harrelson (of the TV sitcom *Cheers* and star of the movie *Natural Born Killers*) creates instant appeal with the Generation X audience. Harrelson is one of Hollywood's most outspoken advocates for the legalization of marijuana. Recently on the cover of *Hemp* magazine, he is in the midst of a high-profile legal battle over his public displays of possession of marijuana. Harrelson's popularity with the youth culture will provide them immediate identification with the character he plays, a man who refers to himself in the movie as "The Pervert."

But it is the casting of rock star Courtney Love that provides the strongest draw for the younger generation. She plays the role of Flynt's fourth wife, Althea Leasure, and does many of the obligatory nude scenes including one of group sex.

Her character visibly wastes away throughout the movie, eventually dying of AIDS as a drug-addicted shell of a human being.

Love is extremely popular with Gen Xers, partly because she is the lead singer for the grunge band Hole. Her songs are often about death, drugs, despair and other themes that play well to the emptiness that characterizes so much of the grunge crowd. However, it was her marriage to Kurt Cobain, lead singer of the group Nirvana, whose suicide by gunshot made front-page news for weeks in 1995, that established her as a cultural icon. Kurt Cobain is the James Dean of the '90s, a charismatic rebel whose music and life captured the angst that so many Generation Xers feel. One of his classic songs was "I Hate Myself and Want to Die."

Several youths around the country killed themselves following Cobain's suicide. He still has a strong cult following not unlike that of Jim Morrison (of The Doors) in the 1960s. Cobain and Courtney Love had a daughter and her fans praise her as a mother in the same way that Madonna's fans are gushing over her recent motherhood.

By casting Courtney Love, director Milos Forman and producer Oliver Stone have virtually guaranteed a large attendance from Love's devoted fans. These young people, who have already had exposure to the sex-saturated material so prevalent in our society, will get an almost irresistible invitation into the harder core of the sex industry. Many who might not otherwise have ventured so far as the XXX bookstores and movie houses may now see them as a new way of trying to fill up the void in their spirits, becoming engulfed in the world of pornography.

Flynt's world of sex, drugs, wealth, power and irresponsibil-

BACKGROUND: LARRY FLYNT

- Born in 1943, Flynt grew up in poverty in eastern Kentucky.
- He owned a number of cocktail lounges in Ohio, where he began *Hustler*, a newsletter to keep customers informed about their favorites among Flynt's 300 female dancers.
- *Hustler* went national as a pornographic magazine and achieved a reputation for degrading women with nude scenes of sexual bondage, rape, and dismemberment. One cover of the magazine showed a woman being shoved head-first into a meat grinder. The magazine was also famous for its extremely offensive humor, which included a regular cartoon feature about a pedophile, entitled "Chester the Molester." *Hustler* gained national attention with the publication of pictures surreptitiously taken of former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, as she vacationed nude on her husband's Greek island.
- In 1977, after spending time with evangelist Ruth Carter-Stapleton, sister of President Jimmy Carter, Flynt supposedly converted to Christianity. He determined to change *Hustler* into a magazine that would "hustle for God." The new emphasis was a financial disaster, and Flynt reversed his decision to mix God and pornography.
- In 1978, Flynt was shot by a would-be assassin which left him paralyzed from the waist down. In bitterness, he denounced God and Christianity, as well as religious leaders who opposed his magazine, such as Rev. Jerry Falwell, Moral Majority founder. Following an ad in *Hustler* which suggested that Falwell's first sexual experience was with his own mother in an outhouse, Falwell sued. A lower court awarded Falwell \$200,000 for emotional distress, but in a historic 1988 decision the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the decision on First Amendment grounds.



"The People Vs. Larry Flynt is a movie that is glorifying [my father's] life. And I'm opposed to that idea.... I think a lot of people don't realize what *Hustler* magazine is all about and the damage that it does to society and to women. And I am speaking on behalf of the victims – people that have been abused or that are caught up in pornography or in bondage because of pornography. There are a lot of those victims and they seem to be going unnoticed and unspoken for in the midst of all of this media frenzy surrounding this movie.... They are not talking about the prostitution that was involved in getting the money to start this magazine. They are not talking about the extreme violence against women and the way that the magazine promotes and advocates and causes rape and child sexual abuse."

TONYA FLYNT-VEGA, daughter of Larry Flynt

ity are contrasted with portrayals of the rest of America as uptight, judgmental, puritanical hypocrites. Flynt once professed to be a born again Christian after having been evangelized by Ruth Carter-Stapleton, sister of former President Jimmy Carter. Christianity is ridiculed throughout the movie, from Althea joking about her cousin shooting a Baptist preacher in the back, to the implied sexual advances of Ruth Carter-Stapleton toward Flynt, a moronic Jerry Falwell, and the name plate on Flynt's desk which reads "Jesus H. Christ, Publisher." Flynt even states that God is working through him, and wears a T-shirt that says "Jesus Is An Anarchist."

There is a second threat from this film that may prove even more devastating. The movie is absolutely wrapped in the American flag, and the political punch it delivers defies belief. Flynt is portrayed as a hard-working underdog ("I'm just trying to make an honest buck...") who fights the system and becomes a champion of American freedoms. When convincing his attorney to take his case before the Supreme Court, Flynt states, "I would love to be remembered for something meaningful." After winning his case, which protected his right to publish an ad lampooning Jerry Falwell as having intercourse with his mother in an outhouse, Flynt tells reporters, "If the First Amendment can protect a scumbag like me, it can protect all of you."

The cast includes some very powerful political figures. James Carville, key political strategist for President Clinton in both his 1992 and 1996 bids for the Presidency, plays the role of a federal investigator. The simple fact that he appears in this mockery of American justice suggests that Larry Flynt's Supreme Court victory is something of which Americans should be proud. Carville laughingly told *Entertainment Weekly* magazine, "Flynt's got a sixth-grade education. Becomes a millionaire. Gets mixed up with [Jerry] Falwell and [Charles] Keating. Goes through the Supreme Court stuff. Almost gets assassinated. When you put it all together, it's a Forrest Gump kind of thing." This man is one of our President's closest advisors.

The role of Ruth Carter-Stapleton is played by Donna Hanover from the TV journalism show **Good Day New York**. Hanover also happens to be the wife of Rudolph Giuliani, Mayor of New York City. She did an interview with Larry Flynt years ago when an issue of *Hustler* magazine ran nude pictures of Jackie Onassis. Flynt has apparently returned the favor by casting her in his movie. Asked for her thoughts on the film, Hanover told *Vogue* magazine, "It's a very political movie, and people think it raises some important issues. The First Amendment protects us all." Incredibly, her husband is in the middle of a highly publicized crack-down, vowing to shut down as many as 150 sex shops in New York City.

Half of the cast flew with Larry Flynt in his black jet to visit

Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, who is a life-long friend of director Milos Forman. These kinds of international connections, which Flynt, Stone, Forman, Carville, et.al. have formed throughout their highly public lives, create open markets for a movie that might not otherwise have gotten worldwide exposure. This movie will be viewed by millions who will see its portrayal of Larry Flynt's life as a triumphant example of American Democracy at work.

Many of these markets have only recently opened themselves up to the irreversible poisoning of Western-style pornography. Many countries have not had the steady rise of legal sex-oriented businesses we have seen in America since the 1950s. This movie serves as a two-hour award-winning commercial on what they have been missing. It sugar coats the poison with the greatest symbol of America – freedom. These countries are inviting an onslaught of the most depraved material mankind has ever mass produced, and they are doing it in the name of Westernization.

It is important to understand that hard-core porn is not just naked people in sexual situations. It frequently centers around graphic scenes of rape, torture, incest, sado-masochism, sexual slavery, bestiality, genital mutilation, urination, defecation, body dismemberment and murder. The impact of these images on society cannot be overstated.

An obvious example was a woman who was brutally gang-raped in a pool hall shortly after *Hustler* ran a feature called "Dirty Pool" picturing such a gang rape. In an unbelievable display of their indifference, *Hustler* responded to the crime by publishing a postcard of a nude woman on a pool table with the inscription, "Greetings from New Bedford, Mass, The Portuguese Gang-Rape Capital of America."

It is hard to identify any one thing that has had as much adverse impact on the moral decline of our culture as pornography. It seems to appeal to the voyeuristic part in us that cranes our necks as we pass an automobile accident. Its influence can be seen in the huge rise in sex crimes and Jeffrey Dahmer/Ted Bundy-style molestation murders. Bundy gave testimony to the intoxicating influence of pornography on his life in an interview with Dr. James Dobson just hours before his execution.

But its influence is seen far more universally in the way it has shaped our television and movie industries, art, theater, music, notions of public decency, and our basic institutions of marriage and family. Pornography's greatest harm is its ability to desensitize us to evil. It is impossible to measure how greatly it has rotted the core of our nation.

The People Vs. Larry Flynt is mainstreaming a key ingredient of our culture's decline. The greatest tragedy is that America is praising it for doing so.

CYBERSEX & CYBERPORN

Christopher Mccluskey

The story is told of a young Christian man who moved into the attached apartment of a boarded-up storefront. Shortly after moving in, renovations began, and the store was reopened as a XXX bookstore. Night after night the young man wrestled with himself, knowing that just beyond the second door of his bedroom lay every sexual fantasy he could imagine. It was only a matter of time until he arose one night and turned the doorknob, opening Pandora's box and stepping into its evil.

At the close of the 20th century, we find ourselves facing an even greater temptation than this on a daily basis. Our turn of the doorknob is the click of a mouse and, via the World Wide Web, we can enter into every imaginable sexual sin in the privacy of our own homes. *If we are connected to the Internet, we must acknowledge that we have attached our homes to the world's largest porn shop.*

I can easily recall the first clients I saw who were hooked on cyberporn. After being lured to a website by lurid text and/or revealing photographs, they had been invited to view more for a fee, which was billed to a credit card. Without ever having to risk being seen in a peep show, bookstore, or strip club, they had easily run up tens of thousands of dollars in debt in a few short months. In the process, they often destroyed their families, reputations, and Christian lives.

I long ago lost count of those who have followed in their footsteps or have been caught by their spouses having "virtual affairs" over the Net. I have read their portrayals of sexual escapades written to faceless lovers in e-mail and chat rooms. These dialogues provide fantasy material for masturbation, and sometimes result in real-life rendezvous. One of the most graphic exchanges I have seen was between a 67-year-old man, who assumed a virtual persona as a much younger Don Juan, and a (supposedly) young woman in another state. Though they never met, the affair devastated his marriage.

Therein lies perhaps the greatest drawing card of cyberporn and cybersex: *anonymity*. The ability to act under a greater cover than even darkness. The ability to assume any identity—even that of the opposite sex if desired. From the time of the Fall, humans have always sought to hide their sins, and the Internet provides not only one of the most powerful invitations to sin, but the ability to hide that sin in ways never before possible.



Like it or not, the Internet is here to stay, and it will become increasingly difficult to function in the 21st century if we are not online. While some will argue that the best response is to simply avoid the Net, most will find this almost impossible. So-called "E-commerce" is entirely changing the business world and predictions are that the web will impact nearly every industry over the next 10 years. Not being online will be like not having a telephone.

How do we guard ourselves and our families when we are daily presented with so great a temptation? First, I believe we must call the temptation by name: voyeurism, fornication, adultery, lust. We must recognize how great a sin it is and then, to the best of our ability, make no provision for that sin.

Second, we must establish hedges to protect ourselves and decrease the likelihood that we will fall. These might include installing filtering software or utilizing a filtered Internet access provider. We may need to establish a password for Internet use that only our spouse knows. We might post photos of our spouse, our children, or Christ on our monitors as screensavers. It is certainly wise to place the computer in an area of the home or office that does not allow for uninterrupted privacy, and stay off the Net at night or when everyone else is in bed.

Third, if we still find ourselves struggling with this temptation, we must make ourselves accountable to our spouses and to select brothers or sisters in the body who will pray for us, ask the difficult questions, and be available when we need their strength. If necessary, we must seek out a 12-step group or a trained Christian counselor who can work effectively with sexual addiction.

In short, we must be willing to do whatever is required to "flee from sexual immorality" (1 Cor. 6:18). If we do, the Internet can be a tremendous blessing. If we do not, it will destroy us. **CCF**

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