

FamilyLife Today® Radio Transcript

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His Romantic Needs

Guests: Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus, Shaunti Feldhahn, and Cindy Easley
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Bob: It's not universal—but in many marriages, a husband has a higher interest in sex than his wife does. Author and speaker, Shaunti Feldhahn, says what wives need to understand is that it's not really about the sex.

Shaunti: Ladies, if you're listening to this and you're thinking, "My husband wants more sex," cancel that thought out in your mind and substitute, "No; my husband wants to feel wanted by me."

Bob: This is *FamilyLife Today* for Friday, February 10th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. If you're a wife and you think, "My husband only has one romantic need, and I know what that is," you may be in for a surprise. Stay with us.

And welcome to *FamilyLife Today*. Thanks for joining us on the Friday edition. We have already spent some time this week trying to help men understand the romantic needs that their wives have. In the process of that, we've been revisiting some of the moments, here on *FamilyLife Today* from the last quarter-century, all in anticipation of our 25th birthday coming up later on this year. Our hope, Dennis, is that by thinking about these things—maybe at this time of the year—we can promote some happier, healthier Valentine's Day celebrations.

Dennis: And when I started thinking about happy Valentine's celebrations, I think of one of my favorite letters from the *Weekend to Remember*® that was given to me by a couple who attended the Phoenix *Weekend to Remember*. I first used this on *FamilyLife Today* on February 1, 1995.

Bob: Okay; that's back a long way.

Dennis: That's a long ways. But this just, I think, highlights the importance of some of the points we're going to talk about on understanding your man, here on *FamilyLife Today*.

Dear Dennis,

When you suggested last night for us to be more creative in our romance, you never gave us the warning that it could be dangerous. Rule number one: Always be prepared!—at least with a spare key.

After dinner and the sunset, we decided to take your advice to add a little romance and be a little daring. Staying here at the hotel, we crept out onto our fourth floor balcony for an incredibly romantic view, not to mention “privacy.” Unbeknownst to us, while we were “communicating” out on the balcony, the maid was in our room, turning down our bed sheets for us. She did not know we were on the balcony / we did not know she was in the room. She locked our sliding glass door.

Signed, Embarrassed from California

[Laughter] You know, really, this is the kind of fun that you should have in your marriage relationship; and if you haven’t been to a *Weekend to Remember*, maybe you need to plan on building some romance, maybe not on the balcony.

Bob: You know, the spring season kicks off this weekend. I think we have four or five events happening this weekend and, then, on throughout the spring—events happening in cities all across the country. We hope listeners would join us at one of these upcoming getaways.

Dennis: Barbara and I, and our friends Crawford and Karen Loritts, are going to be speaking in April at the Atlanta *Weekend to Remember*.

Bob: I’m going to be in Branson, Missouri, the first weekend in April. How about that?—Branson—that’s a pretty good assignment; huh?

Dennis: Up in my stomping grounds, near Ozark, Missouri, where I grew up.

It’s a great investment in your marriage. As we talk about the romantic needs of your husband, here on the broadcast today, this is a good assignment—to go to the *Weekend to Remember*.

Bob: We have talked, a number of times, about the differences between men and women and how we view romance and intimacy in marriage. Years ago, we had Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus join us on *FamilyLife Today*. We talked about the passage in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 7—that says when it comes to the marriage relationship, the

wife's body does not belong to her and the husband's body doesn't belong to him. They both have something to say about each other's body.

[Previous Interview]

Linda: The word that's used in that passage, Bob, is the word, *authority*. It says that neither of us has authority over our own bodies but that authority should have been given to the other person. This is the passage that is so misunderstood, because it talks about *duty*. Lorraine, what do you think of when you think of the word, "duty"?

Lorraine: I think of something I have to do—

Linda: —it's a *chore*. Lorraine and I were excited when we studied what that Greek word, that is translated *duty*, really means; because it's not a good translation in the English Bible. The word means a debt that is owed. God says that a husband owes his wife a debt, and a wife owes her husband a debt. Why?—because they have participated in a gift exchange.

In this passage, first we see that God gave the gift of sexual passion to married couples. But then He says you exchange gifts—and what should have transpired on our wedding night is that the wife should have given the gift of her body to her husband, and the husband should have given the gift of his body to his wife. My body is no longer my own—it belongs to my husband—therefore, I owe him a debt. I owe him a debt in the sense that he should be able to fully enjoy the gift that I gave. But likewise, he gave me a gift—the gift of his body—and therefore, he owes me a debt; and I should be able to fully enjoy that gift.

Let me tell you about Kathy—a young wife who came to me. She was really struggling in this area of her marriage. She was a *godly* woman, but she wasn't a sensuous wife. As we talked, I looked her in the eye and I said: "Kathy, have you ever given the gift of your body to your husband? Did you do that on your wedding night?" She got real quiet and she finally said: "No; all the choices have been mine. I have kept authority." I said, "Well, what do you think God would want you to do?" She said: "Well you know, next week's Valentine's Day. I think that what God wants me to give my husband for Valentine's Day is the gift that I failed to give him the night we were married." I said, "Well, why don't you wrap yourself up in a white bow and give him the gift?"

She sent me, several weeks later, ten pages from her journal. I'd just like to share a couple statements from her journal, because I think they're so beautiful. She wrote:

February 14. Today is the day when I will give my body to my husband as a gift. Honestly, I am nervous! Why? This is what God desires of me; why am I so nervous?

February 15. Last night was a sweet evening. I told John, when I gave my body to him, that I'd never really, fully given my body to him when we were married. It was *my* body, not his. So I stood in front of him with a ribbon on, nothing else, and offered myself to him. He wept, and he continued to weep.

Do I feel different? Yes; I do, because I've fulfilled what God asked me to do. I've experienced a freedom, sexually, that I've never experienced before.

You know, when we ask women that question, "Have you ever given your body to your husband as a gift?" we get a lot of blank stares. But I think a whole lot of what we've all been discussing together revolves around this—for husbands and for wives—that we each need to give that gift.

[Studio]

Bob: Well, we've been listening back to a conversation with Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus, recorded a number of years ago—powerful point that they make from 1 Corinthians, Chapter 7.

Dennis: Yes; earlier, Bob, we talked about men understanding their wives' needs in this romantic area of their relationship. We gave them the top five romantic needs of a woman. If some folks missed that, they can go online to FamilyLifeToday.com and check out that list. But today, I want to share with the women what the top five needs of their husbands are.

She's really touched on it here—number one is: "He needs to be respected as a man." For a woman to truly give herself as a gift to her husband—ultimately, says to her husband: "I respect you. I trust you, and I'm giving you the most precious thing I have—myself / my personhood to you."

Bob: It's interesting—because many women think, "My husband just thinks about sex all the time," but there's more to it than just the sexual relationship. In fact, we were having a conversation with your wife Barbara and with Shaunti Feldhahn about this. Shaunti has written a number of books—a book called *For Women Only* and a book called *For Men Only: Understanding One Another's Needs When It Comes to the Marriage Relationship*.

She said that when it comes to this issue of intimacy in marriage, for husbands, there's more to it than just the way things seem on the surface.

[Previous Interview]

Shaunti: Here is what is no surprise—I don’t think it’s a surprise to any woman on the planet that [her] husband wants more sexual intimacy. But what was a surprise—like many of these things—was going down below the surface to try to understand “Why?” because that’s really—I think a lot of us, we women, just don’t get that—

Dennis: What do you mean, “Why?” [Laughter] Bob and I are looking at each other, like, “What do you mean, ‘Why?’” [Laughter]

Shaunti: Well, and here’s really the thing—we women don’t get—we think of physical intimacy in marriage as simply, really, a physical need. That’s sort of what we equate it to in our heads. As I tell some women: “I have preschool children. When you’ve been pulled on by little hands all day, sleep seems like a physical need as well. When you, as a woman, compare the physical need of sex with the physical need of sleep—sometimes, sleep is going to win. Unfortunately, that’s just the way it is.”

What I discovered in the research—in talking to all these men that I interviewed and surveyed around the country—was that, for men, physical intimacy with their wives isn’t just about “getting some sex.” It’s about feeling *wanted* and *desired* by their wives. Feeling wanted and desired, then, gives them this amazing sense of confidence and a sense of wellbeing in the rest of their lives. So, if suddenly, you realize it’s actually this *enormous* emotional need—and suddenly, it doesn’t seem comparable to sleep.

[Studio]

Bob: You know, hearing your wife together with Shaunti Feldhahn, speaking to this issue, I think, for a lot of guys, they don’t necessarily understand the significance behind marital intimacy. Some guys think it’s just about the physical expression, but there is something deeper going on here; isn’t there?

Dennis: There really is. She’s really hit the second most important need of a man in terms of romance—and that’s: “To desire him—to express to him that you want him and you want to be with him physically.” That’s one of the greatest ways that you can affirm your husband. It’s the wise woman who understands the power of sex at that point—because it can be like a magnet to draw him from all kinds of temptations that he may be facing, because he’s married to a woman who loves him and who wants to be that magnet in his life.

Bob: In a man’s mind, if a wife does respect her husband, and does think he’s a great guy, and does enjoy being with him—in the back of his mind, he’s thinking, “If all of that’s true, she would want to be with me sexually too.”

Dennis: Right.

Bob: So for a wife to say, “Well, I do respect you and I do enjoy being with you, I’m just—the other part doesn’t make any sense to me,”—for a husband, that’s like, “Then you must not really want to be with me; because if you did, it would be a whole package.”

Dennis: No; I think what guys need to understand is—their wives, at that point, do not know how to speak *man*. They don’t know how to speak in a language to communicate with their husbands: “Yes; I do want you,” “Yes; I do need you,” “Yes; I do desire you.” They don’t understand how absolutely off-the-charts affirming that is to a young man, middle-aged man, or even a man who’s been in a marriage relationship for decades.

Bob: Well, and conversely, for a husband to initiate with his wife and for that wife to routinely push back or have a headache—

Dennis: —sends a message that is hard for a guy to process. Ultimately, he does feel like, even though I know his wife would say, “This is not personal to you,” well—

Bob: “It feels personal.”

Dennis: “It feels very personal.”

Bob: Shaunti talked about that. Again, we were having conversation—you, and your wife Barbara, and Shaunti, and me. She [Shaunti] said wives need to understand this is a big deal for men.

[Previous Interview]

Shaunti: Yes; I have heard from men—and ladies, let’s just be realistic about this—that many men have said: “I really want to be romantic with my wife. I want to go out and do these things together or set up this big candlelight dinner, but I have a very specific endpoint in mind for that evening. I know what I want at the end of that evening. If I get that message, at the end of that evening,”—that, again, it’s not about the sex / it’s about being wanted—“that after all of that, you still don’t measure up...” Oh, that does more than anything else to shut the man down.

Dennis: You’re saying that, at the end of the evening, when the wife says, “I don’t want to be with you,” that communicates to a man, “You don’t measure up.”

Shaunti: Yes—including all that wonderful, romantic stuff that he just did.

Bob: “I just tried my hardest to woo you, to win you, to love you, to express that I care about you. We went *dancing* because I know you like dancing. We went to your favorite frou-frou restaurant...” [Laughter] But when all of that effort goes into that and the woman says, “You know—

Barbara: “I’m too tired.”

Bob: “I am tired,” that’s like saying to the man, “You just tried your hardest and—

Shaunti: —“you *still* don’t measure up.”

Bob: You put up a brick and “There are no points for that one!”

Shaunti: Yes; it really is, because we women don’t get it. We think it’s about the sex and not about being wanted. Once we realize it’s about the guy feeling *wanted* and like he measures up, then we realize that’s *exactly* the message that we’re sending: “After all of that, you’re still not there, buddy!”

Dennis: Yes; and you and your husband Jeff now have been married how many years?

Shaunti: Ten years.

Dennis: Ten years. And you say, when it comes to romance, though—setting the table, and creating the mood, and the atmosphere—you say Jeff refers to this as “feast or famine.”

Shaunti: He does! The poor guy—part of it is, again, me not realizing how performance-oriented he was. He set up this *incredible* romantic thing for me for a Valentine’s Day, where he ended up doing this big event and giving me ice skating lessons with Jo-Jo Starbuck at Rockefeller Center. I mean, it was this *enormous*, huge thing.

Dennis: You’re kidding!

Shaunti: No!

Bob: You got ice skating lessons with Jo-Jo Starbuck at Rockefeller Center?

Shaunti: We were living in New York. He went through *all* this trouble, put together this *huge*, romantic present for me for Valentine’s Day.

Then I didn’t like get any real presents for like the next three years. [Laughter] I didn’t get a birthday present or much of a Christmas present. Finally, he explained that he just was sure that he would *never* be able to top the reaction that he got from me or be able to top that gift. He felt like he just had to shut down; because—again, guys are so performance-oriented. It wasn’t till he sort of realized: “You know what? It’s okay if I don’t have to top myself every time.”

[Studio]

Bob: Yes; again, that's Shaunti Feldhahn, together with your wife Barbara. We're talking about the fact that there's something profound going on in the psyche of a man when he romances his wife. Her response is a big deal, or her lack of response is a big deal; right?

Dennis: It is. Back last Christmas, Barbara surprised me with a getaway to a hotel that we'd received a gift from some friends to be able to go to. She surprised me with that. We went down there and had lunch, had dinner, and walked around town a little bit. It was incredibly affirming. I told her I just really appreciated her taking time to make our relationship and romance a priority in our marriage. That's number three in terms of a need that a man has. He needs to be respected, he needs his wife to desire him, but he also needs his wife to make his needs a priority.

For a number of years, Michael and Cindy Easley spoke at our *Weekend to Remember* marriage getaways. Cindy, when speaking to the women, talked about this very point—of making your husband's needs a priority.

[Previous Interview]

Cindy: I have found I have to save time and energy, sexually, for Michael. When Michael and I were first married, he would get in bed at night. You know how you have these little things you say to see if you're in the mood? One of ours—that I could tell you—would be [Laughter]—he would get in bed and he would say, "Honey, are you tired?" Well, you know, after 23 years of marriage, and a 45-year-old body, and four children—now, he gets in bed and he goes, "Honey, how tired are you?" [Laughter]

But I have learned that I have to save time and energy. One thing that I do is that I program myself for that day to think about my husband. That sounds so basic; doesn't it?—but there are times that around—I may be running carpool, going to get the kids from school. I have to focus and shift my mind and go, "Okay; tonight, I'm going to save time and energy to initiate sex with Michael." I'll have to do this throughout the day to remind me to either slow down or—

You know, some of you have preschoolers. You just cannot get your house cleaned—I understand that. I have a friend who—she dealt with this in a very creative way. Her husband came in one time, was complaining: "What did you do all day? Look at this house!" She had four preschoolers. He didn't realize what she was doing. But you talk about blessing him—rather than [irritated]: "Well, if you only knew! If you had to stay with these kids all day!"—you know what she did? She took him into the powder room and had sex with him. [Laughter] He never complained about it again. [Laughter] Never! You know? Be creative! Take the romantic lead! Teach your husband what is romantic. You are not usurping your husband's leadership by teaching him how to be romantic.

[Studio]

Bob: Well, again, that's Cindy Easley, speaking at a *Weekend to Remember* marriage getaway—pretty candidly / pretty transparently—about what's important in marriage for a husband.

Dennis: And she's tapping into number four in terms of the top five romantic needs of a man, and that's: "For a wife to be adventuresome, fun, and imaginative." I mean, she's talking about thinking of him, planning ahead, doing something that lets him know she's been thinking about him all day long.

I have to give you number five here, Bob, before we run out of time. Number five is: "Every man needs to be affirmed by his wife, verbally, that he is a great lover." You can't tell him too many times, ladies. It's just like he can't tell you too many times that he loves you. You never grow weary of hearing that. I promise you—there is no man who has a wife who tells him, "Sweetheart, *you* are fantastic, and I *really* love you."

Bob: We have on our website, at FamilyLifeToday.com, articles that you have written about the five romantic needs of husbands and the five romantic needs of wives. Our listeners can go to FamilyLifeToday.com if they want to print out those articles and have them available to remind themselves of what their spouse's romantic needs are.

And then we've been recommending this week a date night idea for the month of February, for couples. The idea is that you plan four date nights during February, where together, the two of you watch video messages from our *I Still Do*® event that we held recently. You'd be watching messages from Alistair Begg, Alex Kendrick, Crawford and Karen Loritts, and Dennis Rainey, along with other things that were a part of the *I Still Do* event. It'd be a great way to build into your marriage while the two of you spend some time together watching great Bible teaching about how you can build a stronger, healthier marriage.

When you sign up for *I Still Do* On Demand, you get access to these messages for 30 days. You can use them with your small group, you can use them with your whole church if you want, or you can use them just as husband and wife. Along with the access, when you order *I Still Do* On Demand, we'll also send you our "Simply Romantic Nights" resource that'll give you some date night ideas for the rest of the year as well. Find out more when you go to FamilyLifeToday.com and click the *I Still Do* link, or call 1-800-FL-TODAY to get more information about *I Still Do*. Again, the website is FamilyLifeToday.com; or you can call 1-800-"F" as in family, "L" as in life, and then the word, "TODAY."

Now, all that we do, here at FamilyLife, would not be possible if it weren't for folks, like you, who have said: "*FamilyLife Today* is not just something to listen to. It's something

to promote. It's something to continue to make available in our community." The partnership we have with listeners is what enables *FamilyLife Today* to be heard, now, around the world through our website and our mobile app. Of course, we're still heard in hundreds of communities around the country on local Christian radio.

Thank you for your support that makes all of that possible. You help covers the cost of producing and syndicating this daily radio program. We're grateful for that partnership.

In fact, if you can make a donation today, we'd love to say, "Thank you," by sending you a copy of Dennis and Barbara Rainey's devotional guide for couples called *Moments with You*. We'll send it your way when you donate online at FamilyLifeToday.com and request the book or when you call 1-800-FL-TODAY to make your donation over the phone.

And we hope you have a great weekend. Hope you and your family are able to worship together in your local church this weekend. And I hope you can join us back on Monday, when we're going to hear from Lisa Anderson about what churches can do to more effectively minister to the singles who are worshipping with us, side by side, in church every weekend. Hope you can tune in for what Lisa has to say on Monday.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, along with our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I'm Bob Lepine. Have a great weekend! We will see you Monday for another edition of *FamilyLife Today*.

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