

Checklist for Pastors, Teachers, and Small Group Leaders for Talking about Sex

Here is a checklist to help you work through your materials before presenting them to make sure that you are not falling trap to common harmful teachings about sex. This is not an exhaustive list, but it's a good place to start!

Non-negotiables that must be mentioned when talking about sex, regardless of specific topic:

- ☐ I have clearly said that women are able to orgasm, and that sex should feel good for both spouses. I have said that if she is not orgasming, no other advice applies until the couple sorts out the orgasm piece.
- ☐ I have mentioned that sexual pain disorders exist, and that if a woman is experiencing sexual pain she should not force herself to continue to have sex, but should instead consult a pelvic floor physiotherapist to seek treatment.
- ☐ I have mentioned that sexual sins such as pornography or infidelity are always a choice, and if there are any sexual sin issues in the marriage, those need to be dealt with FIRST before anything else.
- ☐ I have outlined what marital rape and coercion look like and explain that marital rape exists and is abusive and wrong.

Questions to ask as you prepare your talk:

- ☐ Do I frame sex as something equally pleasurable to men and women?
- ☐ Do I, whenever possible, use gender neutral terms to avoid gender stereotypes (e.g., instead of saying "the wife" when talking about libido differences, using "lower drive spouse" to include couples where the wife is the higher-drive member)
- ☐ Do I make it clear that sex is not an insatiable need for men?
- ☐ Do I communicate that sex has many positive benefits for both parties (even if I don't spell them out)?
- ☐ Do I refrain from putting more pressure on one spouse than the other in terms of appearance or hygiene?
- ☐ Do I mention how it is a husband's responsibility to care for his wife's pleasure?
- ☐ Would this talk make a woman with a low libido and a sexually selfish husband feel guilty or pressured to give him more sex, or would it help her have words to advocate for herself?
- ☐ Would this talk make a man who is sexually entitled feel validated, or feel angry/convicted?