Bob: You understand that if you don’t have a strong, healthy, warm, loving relationship in marriage outside of the bedroom; you’re not going to be able to manufacture that kind of a warm, healthy, strong, loving relationship when you come together for marital intimacy, right?

This is *FamilyLife Today* for Thursday, July 21st. Our host is the President of FamilyLife Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. We’re going to talk about the factors that lead to and promote healthy marital intimacy on today’s program.

Welcome to *FamilyLife Today*. Thanks for joining us. One of the challenges all of us face in marriage is that when we come together as husbands and wives to experience intimacy, to enjoy being with one another sexually, we find that we’re not always thinking exactly alike—

**Dennis:** Oh, you think?!

(laughter)

**Bob:** —about how that’s going to work.

**Dennis:** I will tell you what we determined. We are very different. We have different needs, different desires. We’re male and female. It’s not that God is a cosmic killjoy, wanting to play a joke on us. I think He’s teaching us important, valuable lessons if we know how to apply Scripture in the midst of coming together.

I think, Bob, it’s one of the finest things we do at the *Weekend to Remember*® marriage getaway is give couples not only a biblical viewpoint of sexual intimacy in marriage, but also help them better understand what their spouses’ needs are in the marriage relationship.

We say to the men what a wife can’t possibly say as clearly to her husband. We explain what a wife’s needs are in the sexual dimension of the relationship. We also talk to the women about what a man’s needs are. We find that couples really are strengthened in their relationship, and they find lots of practical help as a result.
Bob: When you start to understand the differences, then you can go, "Okay. So, we’re not really competing with one another here, we’re not really on different pages. We just need to understand how we make a symphony out of this rather than trying to play solos."

Dennis: Harmony is much better than having two competing, selfish people trying to get the other one to please them. That’s the way most of us are bent in our lives.

Bob: We are hoping that as our listeners hear some of the content from the Weekend to Remember® marriage getaway this week and next week on our program, they will pull back and go, “You know, we ought to go to one of those.”

Because you are a FamilyLife Today listener, we’re going to make a special offer to you. When you sign up to attend a getaway, if you identify yourself as a FamilyLife Today listener, you’re going to save at least $100 per couple off the regular registration fee.

If you sign up at FamilyLifeToday.com, all you have to do is type my name. You just type “BOB” in the group box, you’ll be a part of the FamilyLife Today group, and you’ll get the group rate. If you call 1-800-FL-TODAY, sign up over the phone, just mention that you’re a FamilyLife Today listener or say, “I want to be in Bob’s group.” Again, you’ll save at least $100 per couple off the regular registration fee.

If we hear from you before the end of the month, you go ahead and sign up now for one of these fall getaways, we’ll send you a bonus gift. It’s a game for couples called Spouse-ology to help you get to know one another better. You can play it with other couples as well and get to know them better. They get to know you better.

It’s a fun game for couples called Spouse-ology. It’s our early bird gift for you if you’ll sign up between now and the end of the month for an upcoming, fall Weekend to Remember® marriage getaway.

Again, identify yourself as a FamilyLife Today listener either type my name “BOB” in the group box online; or mention that you’re a FamilyLife Today listener when you call 1-800-FL-TODAY, and you will save at least $100 off the regular registration fee. Call 1-800-FL-TODAY or sign up online at FamilyLifeToday.com

Dennis: Well, Bob, your message on sexual intimacy in marriage from a Weekend to Remember® marriage getaway has got so much great content. I want to cut right to the chase. Let’s go listen to Bob Lepine on sexual intimacy in marriage.

Bob: [recorded message] How many of you learned about sex for the first time, you learned about intercourse for the first time, from a church leader? How many of you had a church leader share with you about it? That was the first place you heard about it? Nobody.
How many of you heard about it from the first time in the classroom in school when they had a little discussion? Okay, a couple of you. How many of you learned about it for the first time from a mom or a dad? Raise your hand. Okay, a few of you. How many of you learned about it for the first time from a peer, somebody in your peer group? Most of you in the room.

That’s where I heard about sex for the first time was from Arnold Beara. I was in the fifth grade. We walked out of our fifth grade class. It was on biology. It was on reproduction. We just talked about how if you cut a worm in half, it becomes two worms.

Arnold said to me as we walked out; he said, “You know what we just learned, don’t you?” I said, “No.” He said, “We learned how worms do it.”

Well, that scared me—

(laughter)

—because I was thinking of who got—“Did my mom get cut in half? Did my dad? How did—” It was just a frightening image. So, you can come up with all kinds of incorrect information. It’s not unusual for that to happen.

We’ve got a book that we keep in our FamilyLife Resource Center by a doctor, a medical doctor, Dr. William Cutrer, who is on the faculty at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, now. He wrote a book called Sexual Intimacy in Marriage. It’s a great book from a Christian perspective to just say, “Here’s how the body works. Here’s what sexuality is all about medically.” We recommend it to folks who might have some misconceptions or wrong ideas.

We also recommend to a lot of folks (and I talked to some of you about this) The Passport to Purity® resource. How many of you are aware of this resource? Raise your hand. A few of you are. I’ve talked to some of you who’ve used this. This is a weekend getaway in a box that we’ve put together for a mother and her pre-adolescent daughter or a father and a pre-adolescent son.

You take these CD’s and the workbooks that go with them; and you do a getaway with your child right before the hormones hit. In this, you talk about peer pressure, you talk about dating, you talk about “the birds and the bees.” Actually, here’s what happens: Mr. Rainey talks about peer pressure, dating, and “the birds and the bees.” On the CD, Barbara talks to the girls about it.

There’s even a bonus track; so, that if you want to have the conversation about self-stimulation with son or your daughter, that’s on here as well. We left that as one of those things that parents can decide, “Do I want to go there or not?” So, we cover all of
that in these CD’s. You listen to the CD together. Then, when it’s done you can work through a project with your child or you can have some discussion questions. It just opens the door for some of this.

I will tell you, the time to have that conversation is before the hormones hit, not afterwards. Let them decide what they want their lives to look like before the rush comes, okay? So, it’s a great resource. It’s one of the resources that I’m hoping over the next year we can actually do an update and an upgrade on because it has sold well. It’s been used by a lot of folks; and I think it’s time for a fresh look at this subject. It’s one of the things I wanted to let you know about.

Incorrect information is an issue. Then, sex can be affected by emotional stuff, too. There can be emotional stuff going on in your relationship. I don’t know if I should categorize this as emotional or not. The issue of sexual abuse and a past history of sexual abuse can have a dramatic impact on a husband and a wife’s sexual relationship.

We did an interview years ago with Dr. Dan Allender who is an author and a speaker who has looked at this subject of sexual abuse and wrote a great book called The Wounded Heart, where he talked about it. Dan said, “Depending on how you define sexual abuse, anywhere from one in three to ten out of ten people have been sexually abused in the culture.”

I said, “Well, explain what you mean.” He said, “Well, one in three that would be direct, physical, sexual abuse, where somebody as a child was preyed upon by somebody else who touched them or who abused them in some other way sexually.” That’s one in three. Mostly with women, but a growing number of young boys experiencing that kind of thing—means in your church; that means in this room, one out of three. I don’t know if those numbers would add up, but I know it’s more common than we realize.

I said, “Well, what about the ten in ten? What are you saying?” He said, “Well, every beer commercial on TV today is sexual abuse. Every time that there’s a woman up in a bikini on a billboard, it’s making a statement that’s an abusive statement. It’s objectifying. It’s making a statement about the physical body that’s an abusive, wrong statement.”

If you’ve experienced sexual abuse in your life, if you’re haunted my memories—there are some of you in this room, you’ve experienced it, and maybe you’ve never told your spouse about it. It’s shameful, it’s hurtful. You just want to leave it buried.

Can I just tell you? Leaving it buried will not fix it. All it allows is that the toxins that are in there just continue to seep into the soil of your relationship; and you may not even know where they are coming from, but they just ooze in there. You’ve got to get it out in the open. You’ve got to dig it up. You’ve got to deal with it. When you do, that’s where liberation comes. That’s where healing comes.
Dan’s book may be a helpful resource. There’s a book and a workbook that goes along with it. I’d just encourage you: if abuse is a part of your past, it’s something that’s got to be dealt with.

In addition to abuse, anger. Anger can, obviously, have an impact on your sexual relationship. I mean, I’ve never met somebody who says, “When my husband is just livid and angry, I just get so turned on by that.” Alright? That’s not the time when you’re drawn to somebody. That’s the time when you move to safety. You see, safety is such a key part of the sexual relationship that anger sabotages that. So, if there are anger issues in a relationship, that can impact your sexual relationship.

Or there could be issues of either real or false guilt. You may be haunted by things in your past; not sexual abuse now but maybe promiscuity that was a part of your past. You’ve carried that in. You’ve never dealt with it, repented of it, or acknowledged it as sin before God. That can affect your bedroom. That can affect your marriage relationship.

Then, there are issues of self-perception or body image. I read an article in USA Today a number of years ago where they were interviewing a number of supermodels. They asked them, “What do you think about your body on a scale of one to ten?” The average score that these supermodels, the women who are the highest paid objects of beauty in our culture—average score was a seven on a scale of one to ten.

They could tell you every flaw. This one said, “My lips are too pouty.” This other one said, “My nose is crooked.” This other one said, “This is…..” They saw the flaws in their bodies. You know, I think that’s common for women to see the flaws and to not see themselves as beautiful or as desirable.

I’d say to husbands, “Be very wise, guys. Be very kind and wise. Don’t make comments about your wife’s physical beauty that are hurtful.” For a guy to say, “Are you putting on a little weight?” Okay, not only is that stupid, right? But it is hurtful. You don’t have any idea how something like that plants a seed in the heart of your wife. That then, does she want to take off her clothes and be with you? She’s ashamed. You just said she’s getting fatter. Right? So, these are some of the things.

Then, spiritual—there are spiritual issues related to this as well. Unconfessed sin. When there is unconfessed sin in our relationship, where we’ve either sinned against one another or where we’ve sinned against God, that can actually have an impact on our sexual relationship because it is one of those things that preoccupies us and burdens the soul with guilt.

In addition, pornography or romantic fantasies. I just have to speak about this because this is so prevalent in our culture. I mention both pornography and romantic fantasies because typically we think of guys related to pornography; women related to romantic
fantasies. Really, it’s the same issue presented in two different ways. It is lust for someone other than your spouse in an unwholesome and ungodly way. Romantic fantasies can be soap operas, they can be those romance novels, or they can be some romantic comedies that just present an unreal picture of a romantic relationship. Actually, what they present, ladies, is this unreal picture of a man because the guys you read about in the books or the guys you see in the romantic comedies, they are actors and the stories are fictional. I’m just letting you in on this. These are not documentaries, okay?

For that handsome man in that romantic comedy to be the charming, wonderful guy he is, they have to give him a lot of money for him to do that. Then, they have to tell him exactly what to say. If they left him to his own, he could never come up with that stuff. It’s a lie. It’s a romantic fantasy.

You watch it, and here is what you do: you watch it, and you go, “How come my husband never talks like that?” Well, because people aren’t paying him a lot of money and giving him the words to say, okay? “How come my husband doesn’t act like that?” “How come he’s not that sweet?” Because that is a fantasy. It can start to undermine your relationship.

Guys, got to turn it around. The same thing is true about pornography. Pornography is the biggest lie on the planet. What is presented in pornography is women who are hypersexual, who are exhibitionists. They, by the way, are paid a lot of money and often times are drug addicted women who are in that kind of environment. It’s how they are making their living, and they hate their lives.

By the way, 60% of men in the culture in the last 60 days have looked at pornography, 60%. Three out of five guys in the last 30 days have looked at pornography. It’s so accessible right now. If you have a fourteen year old son, the question is not “Has he seen pornography,” but “When was the last time?” Because it is so available, it’s so out there.

Jesus said this about it—He said, “To look on a woman with lust,” is what? “Adultery.” It’s unfaithfulness. When you look at a woman with a desire to have sex with her (pornography), that’s unfaithfulness. That’s undermining your relationship.

I just want to say something here. When I talk to guys who are struggling with this issue (I’ve talked to a lot of guys), they say, “I would love to be free from it. I’ve tried to be free from it. I’ve prayed and asked God to deliver me, and I just keep getting sucked back into the vortex. What can I do?”

I say, “Well, the first thing you need to do is you need to not just pray and ask God to deliver you from it; but you need to recognize and acknowledge that when you look, you are sinning against God. You are openly rebelling against what God has said. You are—what you are doing is one of the reasons Jesus had to die.”
“Not only that, you need two allies. You need some other guys who will give some accountability, who will call you, who will check up on you, who will hold you accountable if you are going to get free. You got to get the issue out in the open. You got to go to some guys. You got to say, “Look, I need help on this. I’m stuck. Will you be my accountability guys? You’ve got to call one another. You’ve got to hold each other accountable.”

There is a third thing. God. Some godly guys. I really think you’ve got to talk to your wife about it. I think she’s got to know this is an issue. Now, ladies, if your husband was to come to you in the next week and say, “This is an issue in my life.” For some of you, that would be one of the most hurtful things that ever happened. It’s one of the reasons your husband doesn’t want to say it to you.

He needs you to be his ally in this area. He needs you to understand that it is a temptation for every man. He needs you to help him in the battle. Not to be one who sits and is hurt and angry because he’s tempted; but one who will help him, will help hold him accountable, will pray with him, pray for him, and recognize that this is not about the fact that he does or doesn’t love you; this is about a strong temptation in a man’s life, okay? So, I just think we got to deal with that.

I would also say that when your relationship with one another is spiritually dry that’s going to affect your sexual relationship. In fact, I’d turn it around the other way. I would say when your relationship with one another is spiritually vibrant, when you’re praying together, when you’re in the Word together, when you’re going to church, when you’re talking about the things of God, when your spiritual lives are together, you are more sexually desirable to one another than at any other time in life.

Ladies, don’t listen to this. Guys, I’ve told a lot of guys this, “You can’t do this manipulatively.” All guys have been looking. We’ve watched enough James Bond movies that we see James walk into the room and every woman in the room stops and looks at him. Her eyes are saying, “Take me, James.” Right? We’ve been wondering, “Okay, is it the clothes? Is he wearing something? What is it about James that causes women—” Because we want that power, right?

Guys, when you go to your wife and you say, “Can we pray?” There’s something in the heart of woman that goes, “I love that. I’m so drawn to you right now.” Now, don’t go, “How ‘bout a little prayer? Huh, baby?”

(laughter)

That ain’t going to work. I’m just telling you there is something so attractive—here’s what I think it is: a woman feels so safe (so safe) with a man who is leading a relationship spiritually that she feels like she can be free sexually.
**Bob:** We’re going to step in here. We’ve been listening to Part Two today of a message on intimacy in marriage from a recent *Weekend to Remember®* marriage getaway. I know when we’re talking about this you can look out in the audience and you can—you watch some heads nod, you see some eyes register, and you see some folks starting to get it.

They go, “Yes. We thought this part of marriage was just going to be simple. It’s not as simple as we thought it was going to be.” When you get a little time together, you start exploring it, and you get some understanding; it does make a big difference.

**Dennis:** There are a lot of couples who are missing one another in this area. There are wives who are waiting for their husband. Their husbands are passive in this area. There are some husbands who are wondering what’s going on in their wives because she’s not expressing desire in the same way that he does.

This message alone is worth the price of the registration to attend a *Weekend to Remember®* marriage getaway. It is anchored in the Scriptures. It explains how God created us male and female and how we can better understand how to meet one another’s needs in this all important area.

Bob, there are some listeners right now in their marriage that have settled in and have decided to just to experience mediocrity. You know what? You need to get out of your rut. You need to find a way to energize your marriage and your relationship and add some romance by going to a *Weekend to Remember®* marriage getaway.

It is much more than one talk on sex. There’s talks on communication, on the roles of a husband and a wife, on God’s purpose for marriage, how to resolve conflict, on legacy. There’s tons of practical, biblical, authentic content that you can apply in your marriage.

**Bob:** We’re hoping that *FamilyLife Today* listeners will take advantage of a special offer that we’re making to our radio listeners. If you will identify yourself as a part of the listener group, just let folks know you listen to *FamilyLife Today*; you can sign up and save at least $100 per couple off the regular registration. So, that’s a pretty good deal.

All you have to do is go online at FamilyLifeToday.com or call 1-800-FL-TODAY, find out when one of these getaways is going to be either in a city near where you live or a city you’d like to go to or a weekend that works for you. Once you’ve got the date, the location figured out, then, go ahead and sign up.

If you’re signing up online, type my name. Type “BOB” in the group box, and you’ll be a part of the *FamilyLife Today* listener group. You’ll save at least $100 per couple off the regular registration fee. If you call 1-800-FL-TODAY and say, “This is the location we want to go to on this weekend, and I listen to *FamilyLife Today.*” Again, you’ll save at least $100 per couple off the regular registration fee.
If you contact us between now and the end of the month, in addition, we'll add in a copy of a game for couples called *Spouse-ology*. This is a fun game for couples to play with other couples where you get to know one another better. You learn about your differences. It's a lot of fun. It is an early bird gift that we're making available to *FamilyLife Today* listeners.

So, go online at FamilyLifeToday.com or call 1-800-FL-TODAY; find out when a *Weekend to Remember®* marriage getaway is going to be near you or in a weekend that works for you this fall; get signed up; identify yourself as a *FamilyLife Today* listener; save at least $100 per couple off the regular registration fee. If you do all of that before the end of the month, we'll send you the *Spouse-ology* game as well.

1-800-FL-TODAY is the number. Our website, FamilyLifeToday.com. We hope you'll plan to come out and be a part of one of our upcoming *FamilyLife Weekend to Remember®* marriage getaways.

We hope you will be back with us tomorrow when we’re going to talk about the essential elements, the ingredients, that go into making a healthy, vibrant, intimate relationship in marriage. That comes up tomorrow. Hope you can tune in.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, and our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I'm Bob Lepine. We will see you back next time for another edition of *FamilyLife Today*.

*FamilyLife Today* is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

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