

4.15.19 - Husbands, Wives, Sex, Nudity and Body Image

God made man and woman in His image. Each one shows a different aspect of God's image. God wanted lots of images of himself when He created man, but instead of creating them all at once He used reproduction. In order to mate men and women with each other He made them attractive/beautiful to each other. This beauty for humans was only intended as a starting point. This is the carnal part of the relationship and it will fade with age and familiarity. For a lasting relationship, which is what God expects, there has to be a spiritual relationship. God has a Spiritual side. God in His wisdom does not make the same carnal beauty appeal to everyone. Some like tall people, some like short people, some like thin people, some like people with a little more meat on the bone, some like people with a dark complexion and the list goes on and on. The spiritual part is equally varied, but not as easy to describe. That is the part that gets better with age in a good marriage and is the part that makes the marriage last after the carnal part fades.

For the bond between husband wife to last, there has to be both a carnal and a spiritual bond. God made men and women attractive to each other so they would mate and build a family. The family was to protect and train the new "images". God knew that Adam would sin and bring death into the world, so he would need a way to pass knowledge along to those who would outlive him. Unlike the animals who only have sex for reproduction, God used sex as a bond for husbands and wives. Sex then is for procreation and recreation. Only the totally unobservant would not notice that this beauty/attractiveness fades with age. If the spiritual bond is not developed, the mates are looking for someone better as age takes its toll.

Attractiveness or beauty is not something that is easy to measure like weight or height because there can be no standard. Each person has his or her own subjective concept of beauty. Women need to be aware that men are not all looking for the same thing and have a different definition

of beauty. Not all men are looking for the media's definition of the "ideal woman". To someone, you are the ideal woman!

The spiritual is very much like the carnal. The characteristics are not as easy to list, but are far more varied. To name a few: talkative, listener, competitive, laid back, planner, impulsive, boisterous, reserved, etc.

Self-image is included in the spiritual part, but for women it is sometimes very dependent on body image. How she believes her body measures up to what society says men are looking for helps or hinders her self-image. This can get to the point of not believing anyone who does find her attractive. This lack of self-image has even caused some women to accept attention from men who will abuse them... "This is what I deserve" she tells herself. You do not want to be her neighbor if she applies this verse: **Mat 22:39 - And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** Self-love is a bad word in some fellowships, but the above verse shows that it is needed. Like many areas in the Christian life, it needs to be kept in balance and based largely on how God sees us not how we see ourselves.

It is sometimes the carnal that get couples interested in each other, but the spiritual must be developed from the beginning. When the couple become so involved in each other spiritually that they do not want to face life apart, then they are ready for a life together and sex is an expression of their spiritual and emotional connection.

"That is wonderful," you say, "but we live in a fallen world not utopia." You are right. Body image is where we will start. We are not all going to measure up to the "media image" for either gender. We know our body naked, but the competition is with the "media image" covered with clothing. The same is true of the people around us. We wrongly assume the body under the clothing is perfect and make an unfair comparison. Men do not seem as concerned about body image, perhaps because society tells women they need to meet a certain body image to attract a man. A woman who can't reach the certain body image can develop a

bad self-image even though there is more to self than a body. Much of this negative can be offset by seeing lots of naked people and learning that they all have flaws and yet every “body” is beautiful.

On the other hand, if a proud man thinks he deserves a woman with a body that is in the top 10% for beauty, he will not pay any attention to the spiritual side and only do what he needs to in order to get the beautiful body. Shortly after the wedding he may find personality traits that he does not know how to handle. Her beauty may keep them together for a little while, but age and familiarity will take their toll leaving the personality a much larger problem. Satan will provide a "better model" and he starts the cycle over only to “learn” the same lesson. Perhaps, if this man had been to a family friendly naturist resort, he would soon realize that all women have basically the same body style just with different features. Hopefully he would also realize that the body is not the only area of interest in a wife.

Now we will consider clothing and lust. One of the justifications for clothing concerns lust. It goes like this: parts of the body cause lust, therefore to prevent lust, these parts need to be covered. We dealt with the effectiveness of clothing preventing lust in the article entitled: God, Satan and Clothing. Now we will look at the implication of parts causing lust. This is directed at woman with a token requirement for men. The implication is that the woman is a collection of parts like a car or ATV or a boat. Now we are dealing with objects and overlooking the person. Just as men do not want to be viewed only as a paycheck, women should not be viewed only as a collection of sexual parts. This viewpoint of seeing people as parts and not the whole dehumanizes people. Much evil behavior has followed the dehumanization of people. The thought process has been since it is not human, we can kill it, rape it, enslave it, etc...a few examples of this mindset throughout history have been: Jews in Nazi Germany, Black Slaves in Africa and babies in the womb.

Putting women on a level with other toys for men and asking her to cover her parts that cause lust is unfair and evil in its end result. The woman must compete with all other women that her husband associates with if she is a toy. We will assume he sees her naked regularly, which dulls the attractiveness she has as it exposes all the “flaws”. The other women are only seen when they are groomed and dressed, several coats of spackle and paint covering most of their body “flaws”. Personality is also usually known better over time so the “flaws” there are hidden as well. The wife cannot get a fair comparison when all her “flaws” are exposed and the competition has most of their “flaws” covered. To various extents, we want other men to envy us because of our wife's beauty, but we ask her to hide her beautiful features to prevent lust. The problem is that covering the body does not prevent lust as we discussed in our Admiration vs Lust article, in fact covering the body increases lust as it forces the imagination to go into overdrive trying to figure out what’s under all the spackle. And the imagination only pictures the media perfect image, not the real one. This method is unfair because reaching one objective over rides gaining the other.

As we mentioned above there is a spiritual part to the relation. It grows stronger with age as we help each other face and overcome life's struggles. The problems with clothing, lust and making women toys for men emphasizes a lack of the spiritual bond and an over dependence on the carnal bond. A strong spiritual bond removes the competition because the carnal bond is not that much of the total.

The bottom line is this...a naturist environment de-emphasizes the carnal and re-emphasizes the spiritual bond as we see all the bodies with all their beauty and flaws. Once the naked body is commonplace then the proper emphasis can be placed on truly getting to know someone. Becoming familiar with their personality, their quirks, their spiritual condition. When you have taken the emphasis off of the carnal and placed it on the spiritual you can then develop a deeper relationship than just “wow, they’re hot” and really get to know someone.

A dating couple in our church were both part of naturist families and had both visited naturist resorts with their families in each other's presence and without each other present prior to their wedding. They had both seen literally hundreds of naked bodies prior to their wedding. Seeing each other naked before their wedding did not cause them to lust for one another and in fact, we believe their naturist lifestyles de-emphasized the physical and instead emphasized their emotional and spiritual connection. In fact, this naturist lifestyle allowed them to see the naked body as commonplace and were not aroused at the simple sight of each other's naked bodies. They did not have sex until their wedding night. They saw each other's beauty and each other's flaws as well as hundreds of others beautiful and flawed bodies. This allowed them to not focus on the carnal, but rather the spiritual connection. They played games, they visited with each other, they got to know each other on an emotional level rather than building their relationship on a physical level. Now that they've been married for several years they still play games, they play sports, they are out of the house on dates regularly and they have a friendship not just a marriage. We believe largely because their relationship did not focus on the physical as they saw each other naked with hundreds of others regularly. The problem we have in most situations today is that people only see each other naked for sex and so we create a Pavlovian response to nakedness. Just as Pavlov's dog's mouths would water when a bell was rung since he would only feed them after ringing a bell, most men respond to a naked body with a sexual impulse as that is the only time they typically see someone naked.

Wives, if you want your husband to only think of you as a sexual toy then only be naked around him for sex. If you want your husband to think of you as a friend and partner with an emotional and spiritual connection then be naked around him often...not just for sex.

We must reverse this trend if we are ever going to see women as more than a collection of sexual parts...a toy for men to play with. If we are ever going to build a bond between husbands and wives that goes beyond the physical attraction and into the spiritual and emotional

connection. We believe that God's method for this was to create human beings in a naked and unashamed condition, made in His very image...made to be displayed and commonplace. Then and only then will the focus be placed in the proper perspective...on the spiritual bond that God intended!