

How Christian Marriages Don't Enjoy One of God's Greatest Gifts

Jennifer and I had the chance to speak to 250 married people over the weekend. As we often do, we ended up talking about sex. And as always, people approached us afterwards to ask questions or to share their struggles in this area.

No matter how many times we teach on sex, we always hear the same things: "Why doesn't the church talk more openly about this? How do I overcome the junk from my past? Why are there so many sexless marriages? Where can we get help?"

We never cease to be amazed at how many people find it absolutely impossible to connect their Christian faith with a satisfying sex life. It's as if the two cannot exist simultaneously. They forget that God invented sex (not Prince or Beyoncé) and that He made it for our good. Some people have a hard time accepting this, but He takes great joy when we passionately get busy within the confines of a healthy marriage.

The things that best demonstrate God's love, beauty and wondrous creativity are the very things that Satan works the hardest to mess up in the lives of God's children. If our sexuality doesn't fit that bill perfectly, I don't know what does.

It's as if the enemy of God gathered every resource at his disposal and said, "This sex thing that God invented is just too incredible. It has the potential to strengthen marriages, bond couples together and give people joy and satisfaction like nothing else God dreamed up. Let's put our best people on it and spare no expense to sell a version of sex to humanity that will cause them immeasurable pain and brokenness."

And that's exactly what he has done.

For many people in our culture, the beautiful, life-giving, relationship-building intimacy God created for us is exchanged for something far less glorious. It is a recreational, biological act driven mainly by self-centered desires. Or it is the counterfeited form of sexuality found in explicit material. Or it's a form of abuse, where something is taken instead of given generously.

Sadly, because the church isn't talking about sex, the world is framing the discussion and establishing the norms. As a friend of mine used to say, "If you don't define reality, someone else will define it for you." Because we have been silent, Satan's message is the one that our culture is embracing. Apparently, all that marketing he has done is paying off.

Too many people of faith want to reject the world's view so they end up throwing the baby out with the bathwater. They end up missing out on one of God's greatest gifts. And our marriages are suffering because of it.

About a year ago, we did an extensive cross-generational survey of marital health at our large evangelical church in the Southeast. While couples scored high in the areas of commitment and faithfulness, there were a few areas that our couples scored miserably.

Yep. You guessed it.

Sex and romance got the lowest scores of all the marital factors that were examined. The survey results loudly declared that many couples are faithfully co-existing in passionless marriages.

The words of Jesus in John 10:10 come to mind: "The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more

abundantly.” We are smart enough to know that buying the version of sex that Satan is selling will result in pain. Most of us know that from personal experience. But it’s time we started believing that passionate (and even hot) sex in marriage is part of the abundant life that Christ had in mind.

If you are married, go beyond just believing it. Start experiencing it. Take steps to receive and enjoy the gift of sexual intimacy that God offers you. If you have junk from your past, find someone to help you work through it. If you are looking at a counterfeit, start replacing it with the real thing. If you have been in the habit of “taking,” start giving. Make it a goal to gross out your kids a few times a week.

So who wants to start a revolution? Let’s give sex in marriage such a good reputation that all those jokes on TV about “I’m married so sex is awful” won’t even make sense anymore.

Who is with us?

*After serving in the local church for 25 years, **Barrett and Jenifer Johnson** launched INFO for Families as a ministry designed to encourage people through speaking, personal coaching and resource development. They have a heart for newlyweds, marriages at mid-life and parents who want to help their kids enter marriage without a ton of sexual and relational baggage.*