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“The inventor of the human machine was telling us that its two halves, the male and the female, were made to be combined together in pairs, not simply on the sexual level, but totally combined.

The monstrosity of sexual intercourse outside marriage is that those who indulge in it are trying to isolate one kind of union (the sexual) from all the other kinds of union which were intended to go along with it and make up the total union. There is (not) anything wrong about sexual pleasure, any more than about the pleasure of eating. . . (but) you must not isolate that pleasure and try to get it by itself, any more than you ought to try to get the pleasures of taste without swallowing and digesting, by chewing things and spitting them out again.” (C.S. Lewis)

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Chapter Ten

A Time and A Season

Insight #10: Sexual intercourse creates a magnetic bond in the relationship--for better or worse. If the relationship is mature, loving, loyal and legal, the added dimension of sexual intimacy will be for the better, but if the relationship is founded upon immature and unhealthy motives, adding the “super-glue” of sex will be for the worse.

Ron and Christina, a young teenage couple, had come to me,

hoping for the acceptance they were not getting from their parents. Christina was fifteen, but looked twelve. She had long curly red hair, and soft, delicate features. Ron towered over her in height, had short cropped hair, and a great smile. He hardly said a word; Christina did the talking, while holding onto his arm. After telling their story, how they fell in love, began to have sexual relations together, and planned to marry *someday*, Christina smiled and said, “Our parents just don’t understand. They want us to break up until after high school; can you believe that? I figured that you would understand because you got married so young, right?”

“Right and wrong,” I said.

“I do understand what’s it’s like to love someone with that passion, but frankly, you’ve bought into some bad ideas. I know because I used to believe in the same ideas. I don’t want to offend you, but I believe that the reason that you have come to me is because I have a message for you that you need to hear. You’re going to ultimately make your own decision, but I would be doing a disservice to you, and to myself, if I didn’t help you with some insights.

Here are some of the ideas that I think are playing into the picture. You seem to think that love and sex have to go together, but they don’t. In fact, the more sincere and healthy the love is, the more willingness there is to wait until marriage. True love means to bless each other’s lives, not possess each other. Somehow you’ve bought into the idea that because you love each other you no longer need to care about your parents and their hopes for you, but true love will cause you to love your families more, not less. You have used your ‘love’ to stifle your other ambitions--your education, goals, and plans--but true love creates more ambition, not less. You’ve

used your love to escape life, friends, family, and school social activities, but true love isn't an escape from life, it is the spark that inspires life. Having sex is meant to be part of making love and making life together, but you're not ready for that. Christina, have you ever thought of how a woman needs security in order to fully enjoy sexual relations? Fear blocks sexual fulfillment, and pre-marital sex is full of fears.

"There's a time and a season for all phases of our lives; you're attempting to jump over the self-discovery phase of life. *You can't know who is right for you until you know who you are yourself.* Think of it, who were you in love with last year? Who was it in grade school? Usually, who you choose to be with in high school is not the person you would choose after college. As you mature, you change. You change who you are, and whom you fall in love with. There's a time to be single, and a time to be married. There's a time to surround yourself with friends, guys and girls, to develop socially. Too often teenagers jump into marriage-type relationships because they want to hide together, to avoid the challenge of developing personally and socially. It's not the time or the season; I encourage you to reconsider what you're doing, and why you're doing it."

"I thought you would understand," Christina whimpered, holding tightly on Ron's arm. "We can't help ourselves; we're in *love*."

"Where there is real love, there is a real willingness to sacrifice--to do without, to wait," I continued. "When it's really, really important, you don't want to risk losing it."

"But we know that we're going to get married someday; we've both agreed to that," Ron said. "It's just not right to be married now;

we're too young."

"Then stop playing married together," I said. "There's no substitute for time and commitment to test a relationship! If it's right, it'll last; if it's not right, you're creating pain for both of you. The pain of breaking up. The pain of a possible pregnancy. The pain of guilt. The pain of bad memories. The pain of getting sidetracked away from personal development. The pain of self-betrayal."

"Wait, a minute," he said angrily, "Are you saying that we shouldn't have sex until marriage? That will be years. Besides, sex is a need; it's a physical need."

"Sex is not a physical need, like food, air and water. That's another bad idea that you've bought into. We can control it, and for our own happiness and the happiness of those we love, we must control it.

"We can choose to activate this power, or to keep it somewhat dormant. The soul was designed to rule over the body; otherwise we're at the mercy of every appetite and passion that carries us away. But keep in mind that passions are definitely stimulus/response. In other words, don't tease the passions like a feather tickles an itch, then try to stop the itch. Don't sneak off in the dark together and expect to keep the thermostat of passions at a controlled level. Remember, there's not any more important decision in your life than choosing how, and with whom, to use your sexual powers. It can create the greatest heavens or the most miserable hells. It deserves the wait until a loving, loyal and legal relationship."

They left upset, but a few weeks later, they came by again with a new resolve: they decided to take a time out on the relationship to

discover themselves. He later went into military service; she's now attending college.

A Time and a Season

Puberty awakens a whole new control center--the sexual center--with hormones kicking in, it's no wonder that we are clumsy with it all for awhile. It's also no wonder that the best way to avoid broken hearts and lost childhoods is to avoid all sexual encounters until an honorable marriage. There's so much to lose and so little to gain by becoming sexually active before adulthood and emotional maturity!

Nature has a way of taking us from one phase of our lives to another. There's a time for childhood and a time for adolescence, a time to be alone, a time to be with friends, and a time to be married. If we attempt to leap over a phase of our life to the next one, something inside warns, "Not yet, too soon. Wait." Adolescence is the time and season for self-discovery, development and casual friendships. We cannot be right for someone else until we are right for ourselves--and it takes time to discover ourselves.

Mature and honorable love has the potential to create human happiness like nothing else; immature and dishonorable love has the potential to create human misery like nothing else. Especially if for one it's an investment of heart and soul, and for the other it's merely an investment of temporary play time. Young, immature women are prone towards obsessive love relationships--worshipping, rather than loving. Young, immature men, on the other hand, are prone to feign love relationships for sexual gratification.

The Fear Factor

By its very nature mature marriage provides a love nest of commitment and security that allows sexual feelings to bloom freely. The absence of the fear factor is a strong reason to wait for marriage. Dishonor, disloyalty, deceit and disrespect create fear whether in friends, family or loved ones. Remember the last time you were in the presence of someone who was critical and cold. Did you find yourself being careful and tongue-tied? Now think of the last time you were with that friend who enjoys you and what you have to say. Remember feeling free to be yourself, to joke around, to be quick and spontaneous? Fear causes us to tense up emotionally, and fear causes men and women, but especially women, to tense up sexually as well.

Casual sexual relationships, by their very nature, create fear: fear of pregnancy, fear of venereal disease, fear of being found out, fear of being caught, fear of hidden motives, fear of abandonment, fear of the lover's husband or wife, fear of lost self-respect.

Sexual fulfillment requires that we freely give, and freely receive. Such freedom is impossible with fear. *That's why the sexually promiscuous may know sexual pleasure, but they'll never know sexual joy--an ecstatic burst of body delight, emotional completeness, spiritual wholeness, and internal peace.*

Relationships that are founded upon love, honor and cherishing set the foundation for sexual fulfillment; they provide an emotional love nest that's warm, cozy, safe, free of fear, and free of false motives.

In an article titled, "What Sex Means In A Happy Marriage," Dr. Alexander Lowen explained this idea:

"Tension makes the body contract and

prepares a person for action; the absence of tension permits the body to expand. When you relax, your heart slows its beat, blood surges to your skin, you feel warm and outgoing and you are particularly sensitive to touch. When you tense up, however, your heart beats faster, blood leaves the surface and goes to the interior of your body, you feel chilled and withdrawn and you are comparatively insensitive to touch. You are defending yourself against pain. It is important to realize that these physical reactions are beyond conscious control. This means that the body acts as a silent witness to feelings we hide from ourselves. For example, a woman may deceive herself into thinking that she loves a man or that he loves her; yet when she is with him, her responses are those of a person on guard--her body is tight with tension. She may be totally unaware of this or may confuse it with sexual excitement, but the blood is not flowing freely to her skin, and when the man touches her, she feels little physical pleasure. . .She can will sex, but not sexual joy. . .for like all living organisms, we move away from pain and toward joy.

“There is nothing complete about genital pleasure alone. It is a fragment of our total capacity for joy--powerful, crucially important, but a fragment all the same. The joy we seek, the completion we long for must fill all the dimensions

of our being: sensual, sexual, emotional and spiritual. Love is commitment, and with commitment, with faith in the belief that today's happiness will return tomorrow, the body opens to joy. Without commitment, the body holds back, anticipating disappointment and pain. It remains tense and on guard and cannot fully respond to another's touch.

“With love, however, with the feeling of total commitment that extends from the present into the future, the body willingly, eagerly surrenders itself to the pleasures of the moment. Thus love liberates our sexuality. . .Here is the completed circle of joy that lets the lover tell his beloved how much he loves her: more than yesterday, less than tomorrow. . .When a man and a woman live together, openly pledged in heart, body, and mind and accepting full responsibility for each other. . .they are married. And despite the clear change in public attitudes towards sex today, most young women, and more young men than is commonly believed, require the security of marriage for the full unfolding of their sexual responses. . .Long after the joy of sex has subsided, the joy of love floods the entire being with a feeling of harmony, tranquility and completion...”

Natural Stages of Attraction

Everywhere I go I sense this longing in the eyes of the youth. They want desperately to believe that romantic love has a chance to survive. They hope against hope that one day they will find their love, marry and stay in love. The pessimism is all around them, but still they have that hope. Usually they do not realize that playing house before maturity can damage their chances for the real thing.

Ron and Christina did not realize that being really in love inspires sacrifice and self-discipline. They did not know that you can have a love friendship without sex. They did not know the difference between having sex and making love. They did not know that all human relationships--whether friends, family or loved ones--succeed only when they have a foundation of genuine loving, honoring, and cherishing. They did not know that there are natural stages of attraction that eventually lead to a wholesome relationship.

Through the years, I have observed a natural process of attraction between the sexes that gradually advances with independence and maturity. The first stage could be called **fascination**--it is the natural admiration and attraction between the sexes. We see this fascination stage at its height in early adolescence when the young men are standing at one end of the dance floor with the young women at the other--their attention towards one another. They're admiring, watching, and giggling--but at a distance.

Men are intrigued by a woman's attractiveness, her softness, curves, sensitivity, beauty. Women are fascinated by the differences in men--their masculinity, their angles, their confidence, sense of humor, and tenderness of heart.

The next stage of natural attraction begins when **friendship** occurs with conversation and shared interests. I noticed that when

our sons passed through this stage (later teens) they were more comfortable with young women who were open, friendly and confident, but who did not press for heavy involvement. This has also been the case with our daughters. Our daughter, Mary, now fifteen, is surrounded by young men friends who want a brother-sister relationship--and nothing more.

The third stage occurs when the fascination and friendship turn to **infatuation** or “puppy love”--when one man or woman stands out above the rest. An infatuation naturally comes and goes, but if it is magnetized by sexual bonding it may last longer than either party wants it to last. (This is one of the dangers of early sexual experiences.)

The final phase of attraction between men and women takes place when wide-angled fascination with universal femininity and masculinity advances through friendship, infatuation, then true, mature love: intimacy of mind, heart, and soul. This mature love naturally leads to loyalty and commitment; the main focus is upon the whole person--the “Beloved” as Lewis defines it.

“What comes first,” says C.S. Lewis, regarding healthy attraction, “is simply a delighted preoccupation with her in her totality. A man in this state really hasn’t leisure to think of sex. He is too busy thinking of a person. The fact that she is a woman is far less important than the fact that she is herself. (Healthy love) makes a man really want, not a woman, but one particular woman. In some mysterious fashion, the lover desires the Beloved herself, not the pleasure she can give.” (Four

Loves, p. 135, 133.)

_Sex with honor intensifies natural passion because it springs from an inner reverence for the loved one.

Summary

Giving someone the power to stimulate and activate the sexual bond is like giving him or her a key to your very soul--maybe even your sanity. It deserves serious and mature consideration, and time to test the relationship.

If the key holder is one who would use, abuse, neglect, or control, it's misery of the worst kind. Crimes to the heart inflict the deepest of human suffering. That's why it's smart to hold onto the key until a loving, loyal and legal relationship.

Sexual intercourse creates a magnetic bond in the relationship; it's meant to create circles of love that last forever--for better or worse. If the relationship is founded upon loving, honoring and cherishing and has reached the time and season for a marriage commitment, the added dimension of sexual intimacy will be for the better. If, on the other hand, the relationship is founded upon immature and unhealthy motives adding the "super-glue" will be for the worse!

"The truth is," wrote C.S. Lewis, "that wherever a man lies with a woman. . .whether they like it or not, a transcendental relation is set up between them which must be eternally enjoyed or eternally endured."

Notes and factors to be considered:

1. “Only when we truly reveal ourselves can we ever be truly loved. When we relate as we genuinely are, from our essence, then if we are loved it is our essence that is loved. Nothing is more validating on a personal level and more freeing in a relationship. It must be noted, however, that this kind of behavior on our part is only possible in a climate that is free of fear, so we must not only conquer our own fears of being genuine but also avoid people whose attitudes and behaviors towards us produce fear. No matter how willing to be genuine you become with recovery, there will still be people whose anger, hostility, and aggression will inhibit you from being honest. To be vulnerable with them is to be masochistic. Therefore, lowering our boundaries and eventually eliminating them should happen only with those people--friends, relatives, or lovers--with whom we have a relationship bathed in trust, love, respect, and reverence for our shared, tender humanity.” (Robin Norwood, Women Who Love Too Much, p. 275)