

HURRAY FOR THE VA-JAY-JAY

Wow! This book is simply amazing, so pertinent and without any taboos. Admirably written, with passion and transparency, Rachel masterfully uncovers the importance of having beautiful, blooming sex. What transcends from every page is God's incredible love for His daughters, how beautiful and precious they are, and how sex is a gift God has given us.

The opening is rich. The lesson learned from it is deep and emotional due to the intimacy of the topic. In this opening, you will find simple and practical keys to blossoming both everyday life and sex life. I encourage every reader to open their heart, their spirit, and let God move you in a meaningful way. I believe with all my heart that reading this book will be a catalyst for your emotional and spiritual growth.

It's a privilege and an honor to write this endorsement. There are few women of Rachel's stature—an honest woman of conviction, a woman of action and of compassion. She has worked in this field for many years but she is, before all, a precious friend. The quality, rigor, and depth of her teachings are appreciated as much in the Francophone world as the Anglophone. What I find most inspiring in her is her love for God and everyone she meets. Above everything else, Rachel is an extraordinary woman of God.

It is with all my heart that I recommend to you this book, which will be a source of restoration, consolation, and most importantly, liberation! This book is filled with hope, encouragement, and love. I have no doubt you'll be changed after reading this. Enjoy it!

-Stéphanie Reader, PhD
Head of women's ministries at
Nouvelle Vie de Longueuil Church;
Head of women's ministries for the
Association of French Christians,
or l'Association Chrétienne pour la Francophonie (ACF)

Going through the pages of this book captivated me in such a way that I could not stop reading it in one sitting. For me it was like attending a retreat where the only participants were God, the author, the women who tell their stories, and me. This book is an instrument of healing for all women who have had a non-divine experience in their sexuality where ignorance and shame lead them to remain silent without finding a safe place to entrust their experiences.

In this book you will see God speak in difficult times, especially when you have lost all hope. In my case, I had a first marriage that ended in divorce and I believed that I had overcome all aspects of this loss, but reading this book I realized that there were still things that God wanted to deal with in my life. This book validated my pain and the deep damage in my soul: being married for twenty years to someone who did not respect my sexuality, who insisted on telling me that I had “a problem.” He despised me, humiliated me, forced me to keep silent, disregarded my pain, and in the end he acted harshly and abusively toward me because I sought help.

Today I understand that I did not honor God by letting him humiliate and abuse me. God never wanted this plan for my sexuality, but the enemy did. The enemy uses religiosity to keep people captive and silent. I lived it. The church did not provide me with answers but instead made me believe that I was a strange and impure woman wishing to have a satisfying sexuality with my first husband. This is why I agree with Rachel when she says that the results of pornography and fanatic religiosity are equally devastating.

This book taught me that God continues to create a path of redemption in that He wants to manifest Himself in a healthy sexuality that can be enjoyed in a relationship between a husband and a wife; that everything that Satan stole from me, God returned to me again and doubly beautiful when I opened my heart to His gift and left behind the shame and guilt. In addition, I was glad to know that many of the things that I am doing today naturally in my relationship with my

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children and my current husband, Victor, are correct and necessary, which is important to know in order to continue practicing them.

Additionally, this book answered the question that I have at the moment: when and how do I tell my children about sexuality? Now I understand that I just need to have *Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay* in a visible place, because my teenage children can already benefit greatly from its reading.

Thank you, Rachel, for clarifying doubts about female sexuality from the cradle to the grave and providing practical and simple answers. Thanks to you, I felt that I was receiving the advice of a great teacher who knows for sure the pain that ignorance brings and invited me to leave that prison. You made me feel comfortable with my sexuality and I never felt forced to do all the exercises that you proposed. The parts that I have not lived, but that you mention in this book, will help me instruct others who have questions that have not yet been answered.

My recommendation to the readers is to read *Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay* as if it were your confidant and take the opportunity to write your thoughts in such a way that it becomes your private diary of your sexuality.

-Rebeca Segebre

Author of *One Minute with God for Couples*

Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay, what a surprising title, right?

This book deserves a detailed and passionate announcement!

With a direct and certain style, Rachel Miquel Dufour takes on the fascinating subject of women's sexuality, without reducing it to a simple explication of just the vagina! The originality of this book is that Rachel develops the functions of a woman's sexuality for all seasons of life (child, adult, single or in a relationship) and in all its dimensions (physiological, psychological, emotional and spiritual).

PRAISE FOR *HURRAY FOR THE VA-JAY-JAY*

Without any buckling or taboo, she gracefully delivers pertinent information and resources that are indispensable to an amazing sex life. Finally! A confident and practical book that teaches about this eager topic!

We dare add that even men can learn from this book, in order to attempt piercing the mystery of women's pleasures and sexuality.

We strongly believe in the outstanding impact that this book can have on you! We've known Rachel Miquel Dufour for many years, and the quality of this book is remarkable. Rachel has developed a refined expertise in the domain of feminine sexuality. In addition to her scholarly degrees, she has acquired a strong amount of experience and skill on the topic of women and relationships through her deep investment in her work and the people she helps.

This friend, fascinated and fascinating, has a huge heart for women and we've been witness to the impacted and changed lives thanks to her ministry. It's an immense joy for us to know you'll benefit from her outstanding book by finding in it a source of inspiration for your own life-changing experience.

Rachel takes you directly, but with care, on a voyage toward the heart of feminine intimacy; and trust us, you won't come out unscathed!

-Nathalie and Ivan Carluer
Pastors of the Martin Luther King Church
Grand Paris (Créteil), France

And God created the woman—and what a masterpiece! Isn't the woman the most magnificent creation? We're hoping men will say, "Amen!" And with creating the woman, God consequently created sex. Sex is delightful and a joy when following the divine plan!

Rachel Miquel Dufour delicately reveals page after page, at the most intimate level, of the blueprints to femininity that the almighty God planned and created. *Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay* will be a revelation

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for women but also a book that men won't regret giving as a gift for their wives. We don't know anyone more qualified, competent, relevant, and inspired than Rachel Miquel Dufour to talk about female sexuality through a godly perspective. Hurray for her first book! Hurray for a book that is fun and deep!

-Eric and Muriel Célerier
Founder of Top Chretien; President of Jesus.net;
board member of ZeWatcher;
author of *Connexions Divines*

Rachel Miquel Dufour is a powerful speaker, gifted with words that matter and now as an author able to express herself to so many more. I first heard Rachel speak on the subject of female sexuality at a conference with her husband and it was excellent. She has spent years developing her craft and we are the beneficiaries of all her knowledge.

-Pastor John Leach,
Senior Pastor of Jubilee Fellowship Church in Colorado, USA

In the book *Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay*, Rachel takes us through the different stages of life in relation to sexuality, with real examples and practical advice, simple and applicable, especially in married life.

In this world where sexuality is still a taboo for many women, it is encouraging to know that we can count on material presented in an educational, professional and natural way, as sexuality should be in our lives.

-Dr. Isabel Alacan
Psychotherapist/mental health specialist,
Christian clinical counselor

PRAISE FOR *HURRAY FOR THE VA-JAY-JAY*

Rachel Miquel Dufour's new book, *Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay*, is a refreshing look at female sexuality treated with the respect and honor it deserves. Done with insight and humor, this publication can be used as a stand-alone read or as a group study complete with insightful questions at the end of each chapter.

-Bill and Melanie Dunham
Director of marketplace ministries of the Alliance

Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay is a much-needed book and a must-read for all Christian women! Rachel has a God-given and beautifully unique understanding and passion for the sexual relationship between a husband and a wife. She understands its power, its beauty, its goodness and its holy position. May this book spur us on to embrace the holiness and gift of sex!

-Katie Brown, MA, LPC

A woman's body is a piece of art—including her vagina! *Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay* is a well-documented book, precise, sincere and filled with joy. Finally, a book celebrating women from all origins or generations without excluding the words "pleasure," "orgasm" or "clitoris"! She explores the beauty of female sexuality with care but without any taboo. Bravo and thank you, Rachel Miquel Dufour, you have risen to the challenge with audacity, generosity and competency. A precious book, so much needed.

-Hélène Bonhomme
Blogger, www.fabuleuseaufoyer.com

HURRAY FOR THE VA-JAY-JAY!

FEMALE SEXUALITY FROM
CRADLE TO GRAVE

RACHEL MIQUEL DUFOUR

Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay!

Female Sexuality from Cradle to Grave

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In memory of Nathania Tétreault Laurin, who went to be with Jesus way too early but who believed so much in all that is found in this book that I want to dedicate it to her.

To my Jesus, my husband, my sons, my daughters (in love) and all the precious women in my life.

HURRAY FOR THE VA-JAY-JAY!

FOREWORD BY

SHANNON ETHRIDGE, M.A.

As the spring tulips began making their 2016 debut, I was preparing for yet another Women at the Well four-day intensive workshop. Ten women would soon arrive from various parts of the globe, filling my living room for the purpose of creating a sacred space in which to unpack their sexual and emotional baggage together.

Some of these women had been acting out, engaging in behaviors or relationships that had compromised their integrity. Others had been shutting down sexually, having “lost that loving feeling” and recognizing that this, too, put their marriages in great jeopardy. The goal of this four-day journey is to help each woman, regardless of whether her sexual pendulum has been swinging too far to the left or too far to the right, to find a healthy balance moving forward, where she can be an interested and motivated sex partner once again—*but only with her current or future husband!*

This spring 2016 workshop would be my sixteenth, and although each one is unique, this particular group will always stand out in my mind because of one particular woman—Rachel Dufour.

No one in the room, including myself, was aware of the type of work Rachel was involved in, because we have a “no job talk” rule from the first day until our last lunch gathering, designed to help

women get (and stay) real with one another, rather than hide behind a career or ministry mask.

As Rachel shared various parts of her personal and relational journey, not only did she garner the respect of the entire group, but I also found myself feeling very comfortable in her presence, as if I had met some sort of kindred spirit. She wasn't trying to play the "junior counselor" role, but she seemed extraordinarily grounded, balanced, and confident as she laid her personal cards on the table and listened intently as other women did the same. She was like a cool big sister to the younger gals and a wise baby sister to the older women. They found her sexual and spiritual boldness incredibly brave, refreshing, and inspiring. (I think some participants wanted to sit next to Rachel at some point in the four days, hoping these qualities might rub off on them through osmosis!)

I remember when that workshop came to a close, I felt incredibly energized, much more so than usual. I didn't feel as if I'd had to break much of a sweat to create a healing environment for this particular group to thrive. As I reflected on why this gathering flowed so naturally, so organically, so effortlessly, I had to give partial credit to Rachel's involvement. I truly felt as if *she* had been wind beneath *my* wings!

So of course when Rachel told us all on the last day that she travels the globe speaking on healthy sexuality and was working on the book you are holding in your hands, we were all thrilled! I so desperately wanted to put wind beneath *her* ministry wings like she had done for me, so I was *elated* when she enrolled in my online B.L.A.S.T. Mentorship Program (which stands for Building Leaders, Authors, Speakers and Teachers). Over the next 12-months, Rachel devoured the video curriculum, and I had the privilege of reviewing various parts of her manuscript and brainstorming how she could effectively get this message into the hands and hearts of adult women around the world.

FOREWORD

This is a celebratory book that is L-O-N-G overdue, and will completely transform your life, your health, your self-esteem, and your marriage relationship IF you let it. This message will also transform how you parent your own daughters (and sons), giving you the confidence to speak of issues that our own parents most likely didn't care to touch with a ten-foot pole.

So before you let Rachel teach you how to say, "Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay" I'm honored to have this opportunity to say, "Hurray for Rachel DuFour!" Hurray for all that she's invested into her own healing process... Hurray for her courage and confidence in boldly proclaiming the message that God has entrusted to her... Hooray for a wise woman who is willing to boldly go where few writers have gone before – into the sacred mystery of female sexuality and the energy that it brings into our own lives and into the lives of the men we love!

I believe you, too, will soon be shouting, "Hurray" as you glean from Rachel's sage advice and motherly wisdom, so put on your seatbelt and get ready for an invigorating ride! We both pray that these pages bring great enlightenment and enrichment to YOUR life and intimate relationships!

Warmly,

Shannon Ethridge, M.A.

- Life/Relationship Coach, International Speaker, and Author of 22 books including the million-copy best-selling Every Woman's Battle series and *The Sexually Confident Wife*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Annette Budd—You make my writing flow smoothly in English while keeping my French accent! Thank you for your patience, time and investment in this book. Thank you for believing with me in God’s beautiful master plan for women.

Ruth Miquel, my sister—Thank you for being my forever friend. Thank you for your support and investment in this book. You are such a beautiful, gifted woman of God! It is a privilege to serve Him together. Our mother, Christiane Miquel, would have been proud of you and she would have promoted this book to the ends of the earth!

Hélios Miquel, my dad—Thank you for believing in me as your daughter and as a pastor/therapist. You have been a wonderful support, a wonderful “papy” to our family.

Women in my life—Whether we walk on this earth closely as friends and sisters or whether you took a seat in front of me for hours of counseling sessions, thank you for being part of my life! The stories I am telling here belong to you and I am very grateful for each one of you.

Bill Schultz, my agent—Thank you for taking up the challenge of this book, for helping me navigate this brand-new world of publishing. May this first project be the beginning of a fruitful collaboration!

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Nathan, Marie, Ruben, Dan, Madison, Adam, Madeline, Elie, my children—Thanks for your patience and support during this project. Thanks for your feedback and for allowing me to use your stories. I love you all!

My Eric, my husband—Thank you for our life together. Thanks for being such a wonderful, loving, supporting husband. Thanks for your protective arms and for your unshakable love. Thank you for believing in this book. I love you more than words can express.

My Jesus—You are my heavenly husband; all of my life is for you!

A SPECIAL NOTE TO THE READER

Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay is a celebration of womanhood. It is both simple and easy to read. Remember, a journey into a woman's sexuality lasts throughout her life.

This book is the first in a series of three. My goal in *Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay* is to change the worldview of women regarding their own sexuality and bodies. Whether they come from a permissive or puritanical background, I want my readers to receive or solidify a strong foundation of understanding the beauty of being a woman. Single or married, you are a sexual being. Women will be able to shout, "Hurray! I am a woman! Hurray for the Va-Jay-Jay!"

My hope is that no woman on Earth will suffer from a lack of understanding, from painful misconceptions, or from being left wondering how their body functions. I pray that knowledge and ownership in all that involves being a woman will allow you to fight any aggression, bullying, and/or abuse that come your way. Your worth is immense.

I want to reignite the desire to pass the baton between generations of women, one after another. My dear friend, please share what you have learned and share your own pleasure in being a woman with other women in your life. Let's change the worldview on women!

INTRODUCTION

#METOO #CHURCHTOO #BALANCETONPOR #YOTAMBIEN

All over the world today, women's loud and strong voices are heard more than ever before. This is a liberating, wonderful feeling. Too many lives have been damaged by predators who were under the impression that women, regardless of age, were to be used to satisfy their male pleasure. The aftermath of sexual abuse, molestation, and even verbal sexual harassment is terrifying and pushes women's hearts, souls and bodies into a frantic, negative downward spiral. Some of them end up taking their lives because they cannot take one more day with this ugly darkness enveloping them. Some of them end up in prostitution because they see it as their only option. Others go on with their lives, carrying a crippling secret deep inside of their hearts.

At the time of this writing, the expression of this movement, including voices, noises, videos, #this and #that, are all over the Internet. I am completely in favor of speaking out! Walking with women as they gain freedom from such atrocities is my life's battle! But the reality is that I have been dealing with those desperate cries for decades. Under my watch, several of those predators are spending time in jail for what they did to the women I helped. I will continue to help women come back to full restoration. I will do everything in my power, using my Father's strength, to put a stop to some sick and unrepentant men's behaviors. I encourage those ladies to come out of their shell. I walk alongside them so that they can speak out and still be protected and restored even when everybody looks down on

them for what was done to them—especially in the context of the church. Using spiritual influence to abuse women of all ages is an abomination. All the necessary precautions need to be in place in churches to never leave a dark place, a dark spot, where such men can prey upon women and feed their addiction.

We have to be careful though and always, always remember that even for those men, there is salvation and redemption. If they cry out to God, they can be set free, healed and helped. From time to time, my husband, Eric, and I receive some of those men in our counseling ministry. Those are the situations in which I really need to reach deep inside the heart of God to pull out His love for them, because I sometimes struggle to help them. But God is the true hope, even for those men.

I also want to praise God for all the men who are standing up for women. Eric and each of my five sons are great examples of modern-day knights. There are so many others who do the same. My world is filled with wonderful men, and the cloud of testosterone around me has always been very high. This may be why I love working with women so much. It is very refreshing because there were so few in my life when I was young.

So, why did I write this book? I felt pregnant with those words for too long. We must not be fooled. God is the author of sexuality, not Satan. We must take back what he stole from us. Let's bring normalcy back to what God intended. There is true beauty in what God is thinking when it comes to sexuality. We must reinstate sexuality as first spiritual, then emotional, then physical, and above all, beautiful!

LET'S START FROM THE BEGINNING

He walked straight toward me, with a voice filled with excitement and solemnity, and said, "You know that we are going to get married, right?"

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That was it. This was my proposal. I answered with a smile, “Yes, I know!” This was our very first romantic interaction and it was the first time we talked about love together. We would never recommend this as a way to approach your future spouse, but this is the way we “arranged” our seemingly God-ordained relationship. Eric and I barely knew each other when this proposal occurred and I wasn’t in love with him at that point, but love really blossomed in our hearts three days later as he cared for me after a bout of sickness. We spent the next two and a half years building our friendship and dreaming about our future family.

We were set on four or five children. We started to pray for each one of them while we were still dating. We wanted to bring children into the world who would make choices that would lead them and others closer to God. We endlessly shared our views on education and raising kids, while driving in the beautiful French countryside. At this point, we had no children but a ton of theories on how to raise kids.

Our wedding day finally arrived in October 1991. Although our beloved Alsace, located in the eastern part of France, was filled with rain, we were not saddened in the least. We were starting our lives together and that’s all that mattered. We started to have kids right away; that was our choice and God blessed us with those precious lives. Five sons were born to us in six and a half years: Nathan, Ruben, Dan, Adam and Elie. We love each of them to the moon and back.

Along with the joy of our sons came a deep sorrow. At 26 years old, I had lost six babies—six little girls whom I will never have the earthly joy of holding. Never would I sing them to sleep. Never would I braid their hair. Never would I tie the bows on their dresses. Never would I plan their weddings or help them find their wedding dresses. We gave each of these precious girls the name Damaris. They are all safe in heaven, enjoying all that place has to offer. One

day we will get to meet them face to face and I will be forever grateful to God for taking such good care of them!

It is a rare condition but I cannot carry daughters and bring them to term. Many tears were collected by God's hands during those years. Every time we lost a baby, Eric and I grieved. I intimately know the feeling of caring a dead minuscule body in my womb. I had to release my daughters into Jesus' arms, again and again. I love each of our sons but losing a baby is a painful experience.

Our sons are now young adults and we talk about sexuality in a very open, natural and easy manner with them. If you were to walk into our home near meal time, it would be normal to find our whole clan animatedly talking about the female orgasm or any juicy topic around sexuality. Our daughters-in-law had to adjust, and our sons' friends pray that the night they visit is one of those nights of open dialogue!

Thanks to our ministry, I work with many women from all over the world. As you can guess, counseling women often involves this hot topic. The number of sexually unsatisfied women is staggering. More than once, I wish I was the mother of some of these lovely women. (Yes, my parents named me Rachel, and I am just a little bit like a Jewish mama.) I wish I could have told them so much earlier how beautifully their bodies have been crafted, how much of a blessing it is to have a vagina, how lovemaking is a gift from God, how loved they can feel when they are one with their husband, and how sex is not a duty or a way to feel important. I wish I could have told them that they do not need to sacrifice their bodies to be loved. I wish I could have prepared them to be sexually fulfilled women, whether single or married.

My five sons ensured that my life would be surrounded with truckloads of testosterone. When a woman chooses to open her heart to me, it is a precious gift. I am also discovering that one of the benefits of having sons is that they are bringing beautiful,

INTRODUCTION

grown-up women into our family. I am also thinking of each one of them as I write.

Dear Mrs. Dufour (to those who are new to the title and to those who will own it soon),

I love you as much as I love your husband. Having you as a daughter brings me deep joy. I want to help you embrace your feminine body, soul and spirit. Let's continue this conversation as often as you need so that you can fully appreciate God's gift to you as a woman. I love you, my daughters-in-love!

Six times I've carried a baby girl in my womb. Six times these babies have died before I held them. So it's true that I've *fiercely* cried for the loss of my girls to whom I could have passed on all kinds of feminine secrets about enjoying her sexuality. Although I was never able to successfully carry girls, God did bless me with five sons, and therefore beautiful daughters-in-law. I communicate openly with *all* of my children and in-laws (and their friends) about the power that female sexuality holds, and I speak to thousands of conference attendees about these intimate matters as well. And now I consider *you*, dear reader, as yet another feminine creature to whom I can impart some much-needed womanly wisdom and sexual confidence. I'm grateful you've joined me on this journey, and I know that you will be too. Women from all walks of life, single or married, have unanswered questions about their sexuality. Sadly, they are often left alone stewing in their unanswered questions. This book is the fruit of thousands of hours spent with those women.



SEXUALITY FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

God's master plan for our sexuality is magnificent. He has placed in us everything we need to reach a healthy and blossoming sexuality. We do not become sexual beings when we get married. This is a sad misconception. Sexuality is being built in us since our conception.

So my first approach with our daughters would have been to make sure I was intentionally building in their little hearts and bodies the understanding that as little girls they were sexual beings. Yes, that is right. You, dear reader, are a beautifully crafted sexual being, and you have been so since your first day. I want to make a big statement right there: *there is a big difference between being a sexual being and a sexually active being.*

A woman does not need to be active at the sexual level to feel alive. She needs to be able to embrace her femininity whether or not she is sexually active. Regardless of where you are in your life as a woman, I invite you to take a journey into your body, from the time of conception to the grave, to explore and understand better how sexuality develops.

Psalm 139:13-16: “You made all the delicate inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.”

NEWBORN-BABY STAGE

The birth of our first son was long and stressful but what they say is so true: As soon as you hold your baby, you forget the pain of labor. Well, this is almost true, but there is another story. Every single time I gave birth, I looked into Eric’s eyes and said, “No more. It was way too painful. Do you hear me?” And there we were again the following year—so much love!

Anyway, the first loving sign from our oldest one was to pee on me. Yes, it was a very natural welcoming gift from him to me. I still tease him now about this and certainly point him out when speaking at conferences for this fun fact. Only a few days ago, one of my friends gave birth to a son, and her husband was very proud that this little man peed on his mom within a few minutes of life!

Why is this such a noticeable fact? It simply underlines the reality of the sexuality getting ready in a human body at a very early age. A boy experiences his first erection within the first ten minutes of life and sometimes it makes boys pee on their mothers. The little girls are not left behind; they have their first vaginal lubrications within the first twenty-four hours of their life.

What does it mean? Simply that God made no mistake creating us into sexual beings. It takes a lifetime to discover the fullness of what God intended with sexuality in human beings.

This very first stage of life is crucial because it allows the *bonding* capacities to anchor in one's heart.

Those baby eyes are so cute to look into. You know how deeply they search your eyes when you hold their face close to yours and you let love flow abundantly between you two. This is creating intimacy, vulnerability and bonding between the baby and the parent or caregiver. Those moments are precious and a great way to invest in a healthy sexuality for your kids. Yes, you read that right. If you are raising a little one, please, please look deep into their eyes as often as possible, telling them with a smile how safe they are and how much you love and accept them the way they were created. It will empower them to be sexually able to connect to their spouse, to be vulnerable with him or her, and to bind at the soul level with their lovers.

I am not an idealist; I am a realist. I know that, sadly, more than one of us did not get that privilege of being loved the way God intended from the beginning.

Eric and I travel a lot and we often comment on how much kids are *not* born equal. We do not get the same chances and privileges in life. If this bonding experience did not happen naturally and safely for you, please remember that with God, there is always, always a place for healing and complete restoration.

You may find yourself struggling with truly feeling love for and a desire to connect with your significant one; you may be left puzzled and unable to be vulnerable with him or her. This even affects your sexual desire at both the emotional and physical levels. This kind of experience normally just blocks the emotional level in men.

This is very confusing for a woman when she loves her husband and wants to connect with him but feels no sexual desire for him and does not feel safe enough to do so. Of course, there are many

different factors creating this lack of safety in someone's heart but the need to relearn how to connect is worth exploring.

What can I do if I want to increase my capacity to connect with others?

Ask God to talk to you about your value and how precious you are to Him.

If you don't know Him personally and are wondering if this is really for you, I want to challenge you to take one hour out of your day. Go outside and find a nice spot with some nature, if possible, surrounding you. Take a notebook or a voice-recording device, like the one on your smart phone. Quiet your heart and challenge God. I challenge you to challenge God! Challenge Him by asking Him to talk to you about yourself!

Write down what He tells you. Yes! Write down or record every single thought coming your way. Do not analyze those yet. Just record, note, and enjoy the things He is telling you as they flood your way. When you are done, go home.

This might be the most difficult piece for you: Stand in front of a mirror and read or listen to all of it again while looking into your own eyes, blessing your heart with God's words about who you are to Him. This could be life changing.

To stand firm on what God says about you, it is essential to find your security, identity and purpose in God first. Learn to know what God is saying about you. You will be able to learn to connect with others, one day at a time, in a more natural way.

What can I do if I want to increase my capacity to bond with my spouse?

Describe to him what makes you feel safe. What do you need to feel safe in his presence?

Maybe he needs to say something positive or encouraging to you before he presents with criticism. Maybe you need him to give you compliments all day long about your appearance and who you are to him. Maybe he needs to take care of his body/health, proving that he wants to be around you for many, many years.

Take 10 minutes at the end of every single day to sit, hold hands, and look into each other's eyes, without a word but thinking of loving things about each other.

By learning to connect to your spouse at the emotional level, your sexual life will be more fulfilling, alive and exciting.

TODDLER STAGE

Those years between two and four years old are crucial at many levels when raising a child. They are going to learn so much in such a short period of time. They will learn to speak, to use the bathroom, and they will want to touch everything around them. This is when you realize how much stuff you have dangerously accessible to those cute little hands. At one point, we had three sons in this stage. I remember!

This is another exciting possibility to invest in the beautiful sexual side of this child. Do you know this song: "Head, shoulders, knee and toes, knee and toes"? (Sorry, now you probably have it stuck in your brain.) As parents, we are very intentional about teaching our children the proper body vocabulary as part of their education: This is your nose, your hair, your mouth, your stomach. Yet, we skip the sexual organs or use funny names for those: my pee pee, my wee wee, my coochie, or my piddle twiddle. It sends an embarrassing message that those are not "clean" enough to be properly named. I

strongly encourage you to simply use the words “penis,” “vagina,” “small and big lips.” I know the title of this book uses one of those funny names but be assured, it isn’t because I was afraid to use the word “vagina.” If you were a small child, I would have absolutely used the correct terminology.

The bath will be the perfect opportunity to teach them to wash, in a very thorough way, their sexual organs. It is also the best time to teach them that those are private and that no one—yes, no one—is allowed to touch those without permission. Instruct them to tell you if this were to happen. Make sure they know you would not be upset at them at all, and, as always, tell them how much you love them.

When this is firmly in place, then when they are adults they will have a deep feeling of acceptance of their sexual identity and organs. This is pretty crucial in developing healthy sexuality as an adult. When this is not in place, the adult will feel disconnected to their own sexual organs and sexuality. It will be easier for them to want to ignore those or try to find a way to have their sexual organs recognized and evaluated by others. They might end up being very promiscuous, trying to find their sexual identity through other people’s eyes.

*What can I do if I feel the need to reconquer
this stage of my life?*

You might not like what I have to say here but I strongly encourage you to stand in front of your mirror, naked, with all the candles and dimmed lights you need, and describe your sexual parts in detail.

If you are married, describe your husband’s sexual organs to him with beautiful words of acceptance.

Then learn to use those words in a normal conversation with close members of your family.

Remember that your body and your sexuality were created by God and it is all to His glory. There is no shame associated with that which God has gifted you.

PRE-SCHOOL STAGE

Oh, the beautiful stage of the insatiable questions from the little ones: “Dad . . . Mom, why this, and why that?” And then the inevitable “Yes, but why?” It is so important that we welcome and encourage those questions, even if they drive us crazy! It will send the crucial message that curiosity, especially about sexuality, is good, and that the parents are the right place to get all the information they need. Can you see the privilege we have to be able to answer those burning questions ourselves? Those very innocent four- or five-year-olds ask these questions but the answers are so fundamental when they are teens or young adults. The habit of open dialogue between children and parents finds its roots right then and there.

So, embrace ze (please read with my French accent) questions and brace yourself. Never give them more than what they ask for but:

- Validate the legitimacy of their question: “What an interesting question you have, I am so happy you are asking me. Thank you for it!”
- Restate the question so that you can be sure of what they are exactly asking: “So, you want to know where babies come from, is that right?”
- Ask what they already know about it. You might be surprised! “What do you already know about it? Where do you think babies come from?”

- Answer in a precise, simple and direct way but give them just a touch of information to start. “Well, you are right. You saw your friend’s mom’s tummy was bigger and he told you that there was a baby in it. It is true; babies are made and start the beginning of their lives in their mom’s tummy.” If this is enough information for your kids at this point, then they will stop right there and go back to playing. If this is not enough, then they will ask something like, “Yes, but how did the baby get there?” You can answer, “When a dad and a mom love each other very much, a baby can be created in the mom’s tummy.” You can keep going adding one little detail at a time, like a beautiful impressionist painting, touch by touch. Repeat, and repeat again, until they want more details. Have you noticed how little ones love to watch over and over again the same movie? It is because they know the thrill of it and can anticipate the scary parts, the joyful moments, and the end. So, remember that they are learning by hearing the same information again and again. Be ready to go deeper when they ask for it.

This is a great time to do preventative talks around their own body and the need to protect themselves by not allowing anyone else to touch their private parts. Tell them that you want to hear about this if anything happens at this level. Remind them that you will be there for them to protect them.

What can I do if I did not feel protected by my own parents during my childhood?

I work with numerous women who were victims of sexual abuse during their childhood. The healing process for the physical and emotional damages caused by the perpetrator is easier than the

much-needed recovery from the fact that Dad or Mom did nothing about it. I remember Renee's words and tears: "When I went to Mom and Dad to tell them a man in church took me on his knees and did those things to me, Dad slapped me and Mom punished me by sending me to my room, calling me names and asking what I had done to make him do this."

Devastating! Renee ended up preying on men for many years to prove her mom right and to provoke her dad. We had to focus on her forgiveness of her parents before we could work on healing her body and soul from the abuse and acquired behaviors.

Please, find the help you need! What happened was not your fault and you do not have to walk in life injured and handicapped by what someone did to you. You can be healed, restored and freed from the hurt and injustice you had to endure. Forgiveness is key. Relearning sexuality is another key.

Keep reading this book and ask God to start changing the old model around sexuality in your mind. I am so very proud of you wanting to change, heal and be free to be the woman God created you to be. I love you for who you are!

I want also to encourage you to revisit the way you learned about sexuality. If you were left wondering by yourself or had to learn in a non-desirable way, I would challenge you to relearn it, allowing yourself to see sexuality in a different light.

PRIMARY SCHOOL STAGE

This is the exploration stage. Children will start to notice the differences between the two sexes. They will ask questions about it and will want to look and to touch. They are discovering, and it is good. You will notice that they will not want to run around naked anymore. This is the perfect season to install boundaries and talk

about modesty in very positive ways. As an example, you can ask them to put a shirt on when you have a guest over and to restrict the relaxing time in their underwear to when it is only your family around.

Giving boundaries out of self-respect and respect for others is the key for this season.

Keep talking with them about sexuality in a positive way. Their questions are getting more and more precise by now and they must already have a full picture of what sexuality looks like.

Fight the guilty feelings. There should not be any guilt associated with sexuality. There are boundaries that must be established but that can be done in a positive environment.

What can I do if I feel guilt or shame when I think about sexuality?

Remember, guilt and shame are very different from a conviction of sin. Guilt and shame come from the enemy, trying to keep your head under the water, making you believe that there is no way out of what you have done. Guilt brings only condemnation and no exit. It is designed to destroy you.

Conviction of sin comes from God. It is designed to point out an area where God wants to work with you in your heart. God always provides a way to restoration and healing. Conviction of sin leads to repentance, which leads to restoration, which leads to wholeness.

If as an adult you feel guilt or shame around your sexuality, bring it to God; ask Him to forgive you and to teach you new patterns and new ways to approach sexuality. There is always hope and healing with God.

PRETEEN STAGE

This is the “kiss and run” stage. They will want to do more than just ask questions about sexuality. Their bodies are starting to change. The preteen’s body is feeling sexual sensations. This is very normal. Yes, let me repeat this: those sensations are normal and need to be channeled into physical energy and not crushed and destroyed.

This season is critical for a young boy and a young girl. First erections, even first ejaculations or wet dreams, will happen to boys. Girls will also have sexual dreams and feel those warm waves in their vaginas. Hormones are working their magic to transform this boy or girl into a man and a woman. It is not simple and generates a lot of sexual energy.

Encourage your son and daughter to discover their body, to look at what is happening, and to understand what is going on inside of them. I remember that each of our sons thought they had lost their minds when they entered this stage because of the angry feelings rising up, not to mention hair growing everywhere on their bodies. The sigh of relief from each of them was almost comical when Eric explained to them that testosterone was the cause of this, that it was all normal, and that they would feel normal again in a short while.

I cannot even count how many women have told me that one day, they just discovered, with horror, blood in their underwear. They ended up convinced that they would die because of it. How sad and traumatic! Please, please, please take the time to explain menstruation, testosterone, estrogen, etc., to your preteen.

If you have children who are ready to talk about sexuality, please, please, please explain to them how their body works so that they do not believe some of the crazy ideas that are going around. Do not surrender the privilege of teaching your children about the beauty

and the holiness of sexuality to their friends or the world or pornography.

“I will never talk to my children about sexuality. They will discover it on their wedding night.” “I will never explain how babies are made to my kids, because I do not know what to say and cannot pronounce the words.” I have heard those kinds of statements too many times and it is so sad.

We consider it a privilege to have taught our sons about holy sexuality. As soon as they were ready, we brought the topic to the table, even the family dinner table! The classic question is, “How do you know they are ready?” In our family, we waited for our sons to start noticing that girls were not these “little, fragile, annoying creatures who cry all the time”; we waited until they started to say things that indicated they thought girls were quite an interesting and mysterious creations of God. Eric did a wonderful job at taking each of our sons, one on one, at least every other week for a dad-son conversation. He arranged a nice atmosphere following each of our sons’ preferences (coffee place, walking, at home) and he built, week after week, an open and welcoming place for them to ask any question that came to their minds.

I explained to them how a woman’s brain and sexuality function. It was very fun! Those times produced a good share of giggles. I will share some of them with you now in order to encourage you to get comfortable with this type of conversation.

Our sons grew up in Asia, where a lot of life happens outside the walls of the home. It is a very natural and common sight to see two dogs mating in the street. Countless times our sons saw the tendency for the dogs to get “stuck,” hanging back to back for a while after mating. One of our sons took the father-son time to clear up a very important matter that was swirling around in his mind. He approached the topic with a very concerned look and ventured, “When my wife gets pregnant, will my penis get stuck in her for nine months?”

Do not laugh. It is a legitimate question. Eric smiled big and reassured our son that he will not get stuck and will be able to leave his wife's vagina as soon as the intercourse was complete. This answer was followed by a big sigh of relief from our son.

Eric had the honor of answering many specific questions from our boys. They asked, "What do you do after you introduce your penis into your wife's vagina?" "How long will it last?" "Will my body know what to do?" And just about every other question under the sun.

If we do not tell them, then they will look for the answer in the wrong place. If you are not used to talking about such things, then practice saying those very sexual words aloud so that when it is time to answer those precious questions, it will feel natural.

We pray that you gift your children with the knowledge that sexuality is a wonderful present from God to be opened with their spouse on their wedding night and to be explored and discovered for the rest of their lives. There is no limit to the pleasure God wants us to discover with our spouse throughout our whole lives.

Before the age of 13, kids should know that:

- Sexuality is good and a gift from God.
- Sexual curiosity is normal and also a gift from God.
- Sexual sensations are normal and also a gift from God.
- They are responsible for their choices and actions at every level, including the sexual one.
- There is a special setting to enjoy and practice sexuality. (We will talk about this in the following chapters.)

If all of this is not in place, the adult can suffer from excessive naivety that will prevent them from fully enjoying their sexuality.

HURRAY FOR THE VA-JAY-JAY

Let's address the delicate question of young children or preteens touching themselves.

There is a big difference between the discovery of their body and masturbation, the intention to have sex with oneself. Masturbation *will only become a problem* if they associate it with pictures, images or any kind of outside stimulation.

Don't shut down a boy touching his penis or a girl rubbing her vagina against her blanket. It feels good and this is why they do it. *It is an indication that they need to be comforted or rewarded.* Our brains were built with those basic needs and instincts. One of them is linked to sexuality: *the need to be rewarded or comforted.* So when a kid is stressed out, feeling low, or on the contrary, feeling excited and needing a reward for something they have accomplished, then their natural response will be to touch themselves. You can then teach that it does feel good because it is truly a gift from God. God has ordained that the husband and wife can provide the sexual satisfaction to each other in the safety of marriage. But for now, you will be happy to provide a hug or a great time of dancing with the crazy music of their choice. Let them know that you would be willing to do some push-ups with them or run around the house with them whenever they need it.

You see, sexual energy can be and should be channeled into the physical. For boys, push-ups and pull-ups provide the release of a similar cocktail of hormones that a sexual act would provide. For girls, dancing, music, and all kind of aerobic gymnastics will provide this cocktail of hormones as well.

It is all about not *crushing* this sexual energy but *channeling* it into a physical one. Understanding these skills will be a blessing to any adult for the rest of his or her life.

TEEN STAGE

This is the decision time. Teens should be able to accept their own sexuality and also take responsibility for it. As parents, this is not the time to impose or force anything on them at this level anymore. You have done everything you could, now step back, pray for them, and wait for them to learn for themselves, sometimes through making mistakes.

Our five sons were teenagers all at the same time. One year, we had a thirteen-year-old, a nineteen-year-old, and all the brothers in between. Each one could have talked about the content of this book with you during this stage of their life. So if you have a teenager, I recommend that you leave this book in a place where they can see it. They are old enough to read it.

If you have a daughter, please, please, please take her to see a doctor if her periods are painful. There is absolutely no reason to let her go through this pain. There are ways to ease the pain and prevent negative feelings due to cramps to be attached to her sexuality. If the doctor prescribes a contraceptive pill to ease the pain, it does not mean that this will give her permission to be sexually active. Making sure that this transition in her body is as smooth as possible is the best investment in her healthy sexuality.

We speak at a lot at conferences for teens and young adults. I am always surprised at how welcoming they are about this approach to sexuality. It is a real relief when they understand that they do not have to be slaves to their sexual urges and that there is a higher purpose for their sexuality. When a teen understands the beauty of sexuality, he or she will be able to see the difference between sexual urges, drive, sexual feelings, and energy. They will know how to channel it.

There are a few myths that I have heard from teenagers that I would like to address here. These are examples of how a lack of

knowledge can cause damage:

- “Having oral or anal sex is not having sex.” *Wrong!* I was very surprised when I heard this line of thinking in the States. As soon as sexual organs are involved, you are having sex! Of course, with oral or anal sex, you are not at risk of becoming pregnant but you are being sexual.
- “You cannot become pregnant during your first sexual experience.” *Wrong!* Pregnancy can occur easily the first time a woman has sex. It doesn’t have to do with the number of times intercourse occurs. It has everything to do with the spermatozoid meeting the ovule, which can occur any time the conditions are correct.
- “A girl who has not had her first period cannot get pregnant.” *Wrong!* The first time an ovule is released happens about two weeks before a woman’s first period.
- “You cannot get pregnant during your period.” *Wrong!* It is rare but sperm has the potential to stay alive and active inside your reproductive systems for up to six days. An egg could be released during the first week after your period.

What can I do if I made poor decisions when I was a teenager and I regret it today?

I will repeat myself but you may need to read it again: With God, there is always, always a way back, a way to healing and full restoration. Many things can be done to help you. Please find a good counselor and start your healing journey.

YOUNG-ADULT STAGE

This is the stage of full sexual capacity but not always the right setting for sexual intimacy. It is called the gap dilemma. It is such an important season in life and a concern to so many women that I dedicated all of chapter seven to the discussion of being single and sexuality.

MARRIED LIFE

This is the stage in which a man and a woman can fully enjoy giving and receiving love and sexual pleasure. Keep reading this book. I will help you see, understand and learn the pleasure of giving and receiving. My goal in looking at each component of this mystery in a very straightforward and simple way is that the reader will not only grasp it for herself but will also be able to impact women around her.



YOUR THOUGHTS



THINK WITH YOUR HEART

After reading this chapter, write down what you learned about the information and understanding of your own sexuality. What are your areas of weakness? In what areas are you strong?

- What do you need to feel safe?
- Are you comfortable with using the correct terminology for all of your genitalia?
- How did you learn about sexuality?
- What are your boundaries around sexuality? Do you need to adjust those?
- What do you know about male sexuality?



THINK WITH YOUR HANDS

If you are married, how and when will you share what you've learned with your husband? Or if you are single, what do you need in order to complete your understanding of your own sexuality? (It's never too late to build this understanding.)

- How will you find your sexual safety in God?
- Practice describing your body out loud. What observations do you have after doing this?

- Are you ready to align your understanding with God's truth?
- Practice stating aloud (just for yourself) your boundaries concerning your own body. How does this make you feel?
- Do you feel ready to learn about male sexuality?



THINK WITH YOUR FEET

-  Decide to accept your sexuality; embrace the fact that God created you a woman.
-  Pursue the feeling of loving your body as a gift from God.
-  Get ready to ask and receive answers as you read this book about sexuality.
-  Enjoy the beauty in the difference between men's and women's sexuality.

Okay, now you are ready to jump to chapter 2!



WHY, OH WHY?

So, if God's plan for our bodies is so perfect, why does sexuality seem to be so messed up today?

Being French, the ability for sex to sell almost anything, especially books, is not lost on me. Why is sexuality so far away from the perfect picture the world is trying to sell to us? Why is happiness in lovemaking such a difficult treasure to find? Why is sexuality such a painful, deserted place for so many women?

Why is happiness in lovemaking such a difficult treasure to find?

Scattered throughout the pages of this book will be the real-life stories of women whose hearts were trampled and whose dreams were abandoned. Many of these women have received the help they needed—their hearts have been mended and their dreams resurrected. God's faithfulness will never cease to amaze me. It has been my honor to have played a small part in so many women's stories, wonderful women like Grace.

Grace's Story

We had been married for less than a month and my heart was already numb from all the fighting. Norris and I both were committed Christians. He had recently graduated from Bible College and I was still finishing my degree. We were preparing to start our first ministry. From the outside, it appeared we had painted the perfect picture together. From the inside, it was a much different story.

Because of our commitment to Jesus, our first sexual experience with each other was on our wedding night. I had naively believed our commitment to staying pure would automatically obliterate the effects of both of our very painful childhood sexual experiences. I couldn't have been more wrong. The suffering we inflicted on each other over the next fifteen years made our abusive childhoods look like picnics. Some of my earliest memories were of my Uncle Pat spoiling me. He showered me with gifts and attention, which seemed to fill the broken places that already existed in my little girl's heart. Of course I didn't know it then but he was grooming me to be the object of his sexual perversion. I was the center of his universe. He would buy sweet little dresses for me and then I would model them for him. As I matured, he would buy sexy lingerie for me and then would ask me to model that for him in the same way he had asked me to model the dresses. He would take off his clothes and crawl into bed with me at night.

During my teenage years I met Jesus and fell head over heels in love with the Creator of my soul. He gave me the strength and courage to tell my parents what Uncle Pat was doing. Although they made sure I was never alone with him again, there was a lot of denial about what had happened. I was heartbroken when my mother said to me, "I don't care what he did; he is still my brother."

I wasn't the only one who had suffered a traumatic childhood. Norris had faced many obstacles also. He was only five years old when his father decided to leave his mother and start chasing after other skirts, deserting Norris and his two younger sisters in the process. He came back a few years later, splurging on a happy meal for his first three kids while he introduced them to his new wife and new children. Norris never heard from his father again. Norris lost the ability to express all emotion—except anger. He didn't share the same joy that other little boys would find in ordinary life. He didn't have the ability to cry. He only knew anger. Nothing else was safe for him.

Norris's mother didn't react well to this deep rejection. She brought a parade of men into the lives of her three young children and she didn't have discriminating taste. These men exposed those three little ones to a host of awful behaviors. Norris and his sisters would watch Mommy have sex with her boyfriend. This permanently altered the course of all three of their lives.

Because Mommy was making such bad decisions, Norris's grandmother decided to step in and rescue those sweet little ones. This would have been a good plan if it wasn't for his grandfather. Not only was Grandpa an exceptionally angry man, striking out at whoever was in his reach, but he was also sexually perverted. He chased after his daughters-in-law, neighbor girls, granddaughters, and almost any female who had the misfortune of being in his life. Being a coward, he focused on the most vulnerable target he could find: Norris's youngest sister. She spent her childhood years being mercilessly raped by the one who was supposed to protect her.

And then, before Norris or I had any measurable amount of healing, we were standing together taking vows. We assumed

WHY, OH WHY?

that our commitment to God and to each other would overcome all of the awfulness from our childhoods. In the end, that postulation was not only true, but it also provided the only means to carry us through our future struggles. We had no idea how far away we were from that place of healing or how seemingly impossible the road to get there would be.

The problems, which hit us hard and fast, left us bewildered. Norris was rejecting my sexual advances and was making very few of his own. We fell into a pattern of fighting for hours each night about sex. The nights turned into weeks, the weeks turned into months, and the months turned into years. Our life was just a great big fight, and the aftermath was intensely painful for both of us. I didn't have the maturity to know how to give the rejection I was experiencing to Jesus. I just yelled cruel accusations. Even though I was familiar with Proverbs 14:1—"The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down"—I was unable to stop the destruction my own tongue was causing.

By this time we had young children and we had served as pastors in several churches. We had reached out for help numerous times. We had gone to at least seven Christian counselors, many of whom we visited weekly for more than a year. After visiting with the elders, one church made counseling a condition of our employment. It seemed there was no hope for real and lasting peace between us.

This book was birthed from my reactions to women such as Grace. I am shocked and saddened and I cannot stay silent anymore! So many women all around the world suffer deeply because they hate being a woman or because the sexual aspect of their marriage is lacking fulfillment and leaves them empty. This results in turmoil and heartache in the women's hearts and a less-than-suc-

cessful marriage. This question must be addressed: Why are so many women trapped in this situation?

Can you relate to Grace's story? This is the perfect example of a couple, wounded beyond measure without even knowing it, entering their Christian marriage with the illusion that the wedding band would just solve everything! So much pain for so long filled their hearts with disillusionment about their sexuality, leaving the husband secluded in one corner of his heart and the wife rejected and feeling unloved. Both of them have been serving God actively all their lives. Grace and Norris represent the people for whom God has given us a burden.

My wonderful husband, Eric, and I have dedicated our lives to serving God. Since our marriage in 1991, we have served as senior pastors for several churches in France and have served as missionaries in Southeast Asia. We currently offer intensive counseling for pastors, missionaries and ministry leaders who are in crisis. We speak all around the world at conferences that are designed to minister to people who are both married and single, missionaries and pastors. We believe that, as we offer more prevention, the fewer people we will have coming to us who are in need of crisis intervention. So we travel again in order to strengthen the body of Christ in this unique way.

We believe that a healthy marriage leads to a healthy church—and that a healthy church leads to a healthy society! Through our ministry, we sit in front of men and women who are serving God from all around the world. We have the privilege to have full access to their hearts as they reveal new levels of themselves, enabling healing in places that have previously been untouched. At each conference in which we participate, we offer a time for questions. We provide a box so that people can submit questions anonymously in order to ensure complete freedom and safety. We love those times, as we can really be sure that the heart's hidden questions are answered.

WHY, OH WHY?

We were recently speaking at a conference for pastors in North America. When the time came to read the anonymous questions, one note read, “My husband does not satisfy me physically and I cannot communicate this to him. We are stuck. What can we do?”

From the stage I watched as the faces of the conference leaders who were sitting in the front row drop down. Are you, like those pastors, surprised by this question? We are not! I cannot tell you how many times we are asked such questions. The number of women opening their hearts to me and crying out for help on this sexual level is overwhelming.

God’s plan for our sexuality is so beautiful and perfect that I will no longer sit back and accept the ignorance any longer. I will speak for women and their sexuality. I am just a woman whose heart has been stirred up by God to be a voice for women’s hurting hearts and their secret questions.

I am not a medical doctor but I will back up all the technical portions of this discussion with the help of experts in each topic. My goal is to make these crucial pieces of information available to as many women as I can.

The world’s view of sexuality should not be allowed to penetrate and influence the church. Our silence on the matter has left a void in the imaginations, minds and hearts of Christians. This void has been filled with the likes of E. L. James’s character Mr. Grey and his fifty shades of perversion. This should not be the standard of what sexuality looks like.

Although there is a strong contrast to what happens in the world, the church has not brought much healing to this situation. Its negative influence in the marital bedroom has been complicating relationships for far too long. Husbands and wives are not kids and should not be treated as such. They must create their own sexual symphony with God.

The difficulties of being a single Christian woman are even greater! The church is treating single women as if they were not sexual beings at all. It instructs them to either suppress any sexual desire or to indulge in masturbation with an unspoken depth of culpability attached to it. These two common pieces of advice are the only options presented. What a devastating way to approach sexuality!

Let's return to Grace and Norris's story. I am delighted to say that things didn't stay the way they were when we left them.

After about fifteen years of fighting, it gradually became obvious to me that my real enemy wasn't Norris at all. There was one who was out to destroy my soul, and if I didn't start engaging in battle with him, I was never going to be able to live the life Jesus wanted me to live. I was no longer willing to be just a pawn in a spiritual conflict.

I started to seek out my Savior in completely new ways. I learned humility from Jesus. I learned to value Norris more than I valued myself. My attitude about sin, especially my own, changed. I no longer wanted to mitigate, justify, hide or assuage my sin. I stopped putting Norris's sin on one side of the scale and mine on the opposite, trying to prove that he was the culprit. With Jesus as my advocate, I wanted to face my sin. I asked Him to search my heart and show me what resided there. Then, and only after I invited Him to do so, we started to get rid of what was entangling me, and I started running the race He set out for me.

I also came to understand that I really didn't know Jesus in the intimate way He desired for me to know Him. I probably knew the Bible better than most of the people I knew. I had memorized several books. I was a champion at Bible trivia. I also had a deep understanding of doctrine and could debate almost any biblical topic on an intelligent level. But in the deepest part of my heart, I was missing the intimacy that

WHY, OH WHY?

He desired to share with me. I started listening to His voice. Now, I daily sit with a notebook in hand and ask Him what is on His heart for me. I write down what He says. I make sure to tuck it deep in my heart and carry it with me all day long.

Forgiveness became a normal part of my life. I asked my Creator to show me everyone I was holding bitterness toward or anger against, and with His help, I forgave them. Because I am so tempted to hold evil in my heart, this is a process that I have found I *must* do on a regular basis. Sometimes I need to set aside large chunks of time after I have been hurt, to clear all of the unforgiveness out of my heart. It is a lot of work but if I don't do it, the cost is much too high.

I learned the power of blessing. I started to look for anything for which I could praise Norris and then did so. It wasn't enough to try to stop criticizing him or to stop telling him how he was failing at meeting my needs. I filled my mouth with so much praise that there simply wasn't room for anything else. Now, praising Norris comes naturally for me and complaining about him seems foreign.

With the help of an amazing Christian couple that counsels pastors, we learned how to view our memories through Jesus' eyes. In each painful memory, we asked Jesus where He was when something awful happened, and He showed us that He had not left us to struggle through those events alone. He was right there, wanting to comfort, hold and love us through each situation. Now those memories are no longer full of pain for us. They have simply become reminders of His faithfulness.

Somewhere in this mess, Norris and I fell in love with each other. We are more than just parents and ministry partners; we value each other as the precious gift that God intended each of us to have and to be.

HURRAY FOR THE VA-JAY-JAY

Married or single, God created all women to be sexually alive, regardless of their marital status. As a woman, it is crucial to understand how your body functions and to grasp how God built you to give and to receive pleasure. He has perfectly created your body, your spirit and your mind to experience the fullness of the pleasure He intended for you to experience on this earth.

I pray that my simple words will touch your heart and set you free so that you can enjoy being a woman, your own sexuality, and, if you are married, your husband to the fullness God intended for you! It is my prayer that you are able to write your very own love story about your own sexuality. It doesn't matter whether your background has puritanical roots, a very permissive understanding of sexuality, or if you have been wounded in your sexuality, feeling broken beyond repair; your own story will be beautiful.

YOUR THOUGHTS



THINK WITH YOUR HEART



- What does happiness look like for you?
- Does your idea of happiness line up with God's idea of happiness for you?

THINK WITH YOUR HANDS



Take time to reevaluate what is in your heart. What does it truly desire? (Be sure to be honest with yourself in your answer.)

- Ask God to show you the hidden things in your heart. What did He say?

THINK WITH YOUR FEET



Set practical goals to start working toward this happiness.



What are you going to change in your life to walk toward those goals?