



PARTICIPANT GUIDE

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

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THE MOMCO  
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DENVER, CO 80231

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# *this is motherhood.*

NEVER FORGET THAT LOVE IS THE BEST THING WE DO. LOVE BIG, LOVE MESSY, LOVE LOUD. SLOW DOWN AND CUDDLE YOUR LITTLES, EVEN WHEN THEY'RE BIG. ABANDON THE LIE OF PERFECTIONISM. LEARN FROM YOUR KIDS AND COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES, AND THEN STAND IN AWE OF THE MASTERPIECE YOU CREATE. SMILE KNOWING RIGHT NOW WILL TASTE EVEN BETTER AS A MEMORY. DECLARE GOODNESS; THE WORDS YOU SPEAK DICTATE THE LIFE IN FRONT OF YOU. REMEMBER THAT BAD DAYS COME AND GO. WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, DANCE IT OUT. YOU ARE LOVED BY A GOOD GOD WHO CALLS YOU DAUGHTER. TEND TO YOUR OWN WOUNDS AS GENTLY AS YOU DO THE SKINNED KNEES AND THE JAMMED FINGERS AND THE HURT FEELINGS. BE THE FRIEND YOU NEED, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE BUSY. HUG PEOPLE TOO LONG. CATCH THE TEARS OF OTHER MOMS TOO. SPEAK UP FOR THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE A VOICE AND YOUR KIDS WILL DO THE SAME. SIT IN THE WARMTH THAT YOUR BABY WILL CHANGE THE WORLD SOMEDAY. STAND KNOWING THAT YOU CAN TOO.



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# WEEK 1: CHALLENGING OUR PERSPECTIVES ON SEX

## AGENDA



Introductions  
Group Expectations  
Facts About Sex and Marriage  
Sex and Culture  
Putting It Into Practice

## GROUP EXPECTATIONS

1. I will keep everything shared in this group confidential.
2. I will not judge other women in this group.
3. I will not compare myself to other women in this group.
4. I will respect myself and those around me.
5. I will not give advice or try to “counsel” other Members.
6. I will keep my phone turned off during group.
7. I will show my commitment to my group by attending every session and doing my homework.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## FACTS ABOUT SEX AND MARRIAGE

- The vast majority of people do have sex before they're married. In fact, only about 3% of the population waits until marriage. Even in surveys of highly religious women, only 29% were virgins on their wedding nights.
- 18% of women report using pornography once a week (it's not just a man's issue!).
- About 59% of women usually or always reach climax when they make love with their husband. But that means that 41% don't.
- Roughly, 10% of women never reach climax.
- 44% of women report making love less than once a week.
- 40% of husbands ages 25-44 think that they don't have sex enough, and it really bothers them.
- 24-30% of wives have a higher sex drive than their husbands – and that really bothers them, too.
- The best years for sex in marriage tend to be between the years 16-24, after you've been married for over a decade and a half, the kids are sleeping through the night, and you're really vulnerable and close with your spouse!

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"4 Cool Statistics About Abstinence in the USA", November 30, 2012, <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2013/08/30/women-addicted-to-porn-stats>

Luke Gilkerson, "How Many Women Are Hooked on Porn? 10 Stats That May Shock You." August 30, 2013. <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2013/08/30/women-addicted-to-porn-stats>

All statistics taken from Sheila Wray Gregoire, *The Good Girl's Guide to Great Sex: And you thought bad girls have all the fun*. Zondervan, 2012.

# SEX AND CULTURE

Our culture worships sex. Stand in line at any grocery store, and you'll be greeted by rows of magazines with all the newest sex tips. On each cover, a nearly naked woman stares back at us in condemnation. She's beautiful. She's alluring. She's confident in her sexuality. She doesn't have banana mash on her yoga pants, and if she had less than six hours of sleep last night because babies were crying, we can't see it. She has it all together.

*How does our culture's view of sex affect our expectations?*

## **OBLIGATION SEX**

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Obligation sex isn't sexy.

*How do expectations and obligations take the fun out of sex?*

*When you hear the phrase, "obligation sex," what do you think of? How does it make you feel?*

## **SEX IS NOT THE PROBLEM**

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*How can sex seem like more of a problem than a solution?*

We need to stop seeing sex as the problem and start seeing sex as the promise.

*What have you found to be some of the benefits of making love?*

## SEX IS A GIFT

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*Sex is not just something that wives do for their spouse.  
Sex is for us, too.*

Sex is the ultimate “knowing” of someone else, not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually, too.

## SEX IS A SOLUTION

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The more negatively we think about sex, the worse our experience will be. The benefits of sex will only come if we stop seeing sex as the *source* of our problems, and start seeing sex as the *solution* to many of them.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Does my view of sex steal the joy from sex? If so, in what ways?*

*What can I do to combat that?*

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Choose three positive things to tell yourself about sex and intimacy throughout the day and write them below. Choose a specific prompt, such as stopping at a stop sign or opening the fridge, to say them out loud. Practice filling your mind with truth!

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## JOURNALING PROMPTS

1. *What are some of the lies that I believe about sex?*

2. *What are the promises about sex I want to believe instead?*

A dark, moody photograph of a bed with white linens. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on the folds of the fabric and deep shadows elsewhere. The word "mood" is written in a large, white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

*mood*

# WEEK 2: OUR BRAIN AND OUR LIBIDO

## AGENDA



Week 1 Reflections  
Our Brain and Our Libido  
Sex in the Media  
Multitasking and Sex  
Getting “In the Mood”  
Putting It Into Practice

# OUR BRAIN AND OUR LIBIDO

According to a study by the University of British Columbia, men tend to be aroused before making love and most women are not aroused until they start making love.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*How does the entertainment industry portray the sex drives of men and women?*

*What does the media get wrong? What does the media get right?*

*If you're not "in the mood" before you start making love, there's nothing wrong with you! You just take longer to get warmed up!*

For women, our sex drives are primarily in our heads. If our heads aren't engaged, our bodies won't follow.

*About 30% of wives are in marriages where they're the ones with the higher sex drive. They're the ones panting and their husbands don't seem to notice. If that's the case for you, there are some resources at the end to help you.*

*Have you ever been the spouse with the higher libido?*

*If so, how does that feel?*

We have a great deal of power when it comes to our libidos! Instead of waiting to feel "in the mood," we can tell ourselves positive things about sex: *I am going to enjoy this tonight, I am going to sleep so well after this, or I am going to rock my spouse's world!*

## MULTITASKING AND SEX

It's not about what he's doing; it's about what you're thinking!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*How does my brain keep me from enjoying sex?*

*What kinds of things do I think about when I'm having sex?*

*How can we combat this?*

*Why do you think women often take longer to get "in the mood"?*

*Men make love to feel loved, whereas women need to feel loved in order to make love.*

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- If you make love this week, keep your head engaged! Ask yourself: What feels good right now? That makes your brain cut off that shopping list and concentrate instead on your body. And you just may find that it does feel good, after all!
- If you do not make love this week, ask yourself: Are my thoughts keeping me from wanting to be intimate with my spouse? If so, ask yourself how your brain is keeping you from being able to take pleasure in sex.

## JOURNALING PROMPTS

*Am I using my brain and my thought patterns to grow or to hinder my sexual relationship with my spouse?*

*letting  
go*



# WEEK 3: SEX AND CONTROL

## AGENDA



Week 2 Reflections  
Letting Go  
Trust  
Embracing Your Sexual Side  
Being Naked  
Putting It Into Practice

# WHY WE CAN'T BE CONTROL FREAKS AND HAVE GREAT SEX

*Do I have trouble being vulnerable and letting people help me?*

Sex was designed so that we would be totally vulnerable with our spouses, forming a bond that we would get with no one else.

*Great sex, at its essence, is the opposite of feeling in control.*

## **GREAT SEX REQUIRES LETTING GO**

We care what others think of us. We train ourselves to be conscious of our every move. But great sex means throwing caution to the wind and letting yourself be primitive, not proper.

*Why do some women have a hard time feeling "out of control" and letting go?*

## **GREAT SEX REQUIRES TRUST**

In order to enjoy sex completely, we must stop being vigilant and start letting go. To do that, we have to be able to trust. When we trust, we can turn off our brains and let ourselves feel.

*What makes it hard for me to trust my spouse?*

*What boundaries can I put in place to build trust?*

## **GREAT SEX REQUIRES EMBRACING YOUR SEXUAL SIDE**

Feeling sexual is scary to many women, because it feels shameful. There is nothing shameful about making love to your spouse. There is nothing wrong with feeling overwhelmed in the moment. There is nothing wrong with desperately wanting to touch or to be touched. There is nothing wrong with feeling as if you're on fire!

*How can I embrace my sexual side and initiate sex when it doesn't feel like "me"?*

## **GREAT SEX REQUIRES BEING NAKED**

Great sex means you're naked. You can't hide. He sees all of you – and he still accepts you and wants you.

*How can I find a way to think more positively about my body, even if I don't like all of it?*

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Embrace your sexual side! Find a way to flirt with your spouse or initiate something fun.

If you are having a hard time embracing your entire body, work on being kind to yourself. Think of five things that you like about your body, and tell them to yourself every day.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## JOURNALING PROMPTS

*I don't like feeling out of control in these situations ...*

*When I start to fear not being in control, I will tell myself this instead ...*

*truth*



# WEEK 4: UNPACKING OUR SEXUAL BAGGAGE

## AGENDA



Week 3 Reflections  
Unpacking Our Sexual Baggage  
Sexual Hurts  
Replacing Negative Thoughts With Truth  
Putting It Into Practice

# UNPACKING OUR SEXUAL BAGGAGE

*What sexual messages did you grow up with?*

*How can I give my children a healthy message about sex?*

Our sexuality and our sense of identity are intricately linked. When we share a sexual experience with someone else, he “knows” us in a way that is totally unique and personal. When someone hurts us sexually, it affects us deeper than any other hurt. It pierces us to the core.

*If sex has been used as a weapon against you, how can it be something “beautiful” now?*

If someone stole your childhood or your teenage years, do not give them the power to steal your marriage now.

## LEAVING THE BAGGAGE BEHIND AND MOVING FORWARD

2 Corinthians 10:5

*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

*What is the difference between having a thought and feeding a thought?*

*How can you use truth to overcome bitterness, jealousy or pain in your background?*

*Your healing and identity are not based on what you do with your body. They're based on what Jesus already did with his.*

*What would it look like to have my identity and sex life made new?*

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- Replace negative messages with the truth. If there's a particular thought pattern that you're battling, write down your truths on a Post-it note or store on your phone. When a negative thought enters your head, pull out that truth, read it aloud and pray through it.

## JOURNALING PROMPTS

*I'm feeding and nurturing these negative thoughts, but I can take them captive and replace them with these thoughts instead ...*

*love*



# WEEK 5: MAKE LOVE, NOT SEX

## AGENDA



Week 4 Reflections  
How to Make Love, Not Just Have Sex  
Intimacy  
Putting It Into Practice

# HOW TO MAKE LOVE, NOT JUST HAVE SEX

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*The best years for sex in marriage are between years 16-24. There are good times ahead!*

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*In what ways can sex get better the longer we are married?*

*How does commitment and connection add to the pleasure of sexual intimacy?*

GENESIS 4:1

*And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord."*

*What does the word "intimacy" mean to you?*

*How does intimacy affect our responsiveness during sex?*

*How can we make sex feel more intimate?*

*What are the differences between physical intimacy, emotional intimacy and spiritual intimacy?*

*What do these look like in the bedroom?*

*Billions of people have had sex, but not all of them have made love. One requires your body. One requires all of you. That is what makes marriage so powerful.*

*What is the difference between making love and having sex?*

*Have you ever experienced "make up sex" before? What do you think makes it feel so exciting?*

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

This week, focus on connecting spiritually with your spouse. When we feel like we know each other better, and we invite each other into our spiritual lives, we will feel far more intimate. Start by praying more together. If prayer seems intimidating to you, here are some ideas to help you get started:

- Pray about something very specific. Each of you pray two sentences.
- Use a book of prayers and read them aloud.
- Pray a blessing at the end of the day, hugging each other in bed. Keep it short. For example: God, help my husband to grow his client base at work, but help him also have the opportunity to encourage someone he meets. Let people see what a kind man he is.
- Before meals, try to pray a “thank you” for something other than the food. Take turns and include your kids.

## JOURNALING PROMPTS

*To me, making love means ...*

*I have a hard time being vulnerable because ...*

# priorities



# WEEK 6: PRIORITIZING YOUR SEX LIFE

## AGENDA



Week 5 Reflections  
Finding the Time  
Finding the Energy  
Finding Your Sexual Self  
Putting It Into Practice

# HOW TO PRIOTITIZE YOUR SEX LIFE

Now is the time to put everything we have learned into practice. We may want great sex, but without some planning on our part, it isn't just going to happen.

We have laid the framework for the mental, emotional and spiritual roadblocks we need to overcome in order to live a passionate life. But great sex also needs time, energy and priority.

*How do I find the time?*

*Once you're parents, your marriage matters more (not less), because now other people are counting on you.*

You are not Superwoman. And that's OK!

*How do I find the energy?*

The most exhausting years of your life will likely be when your children are young. Since arousal depends on our ability to stay focused, exhaustion becomes one of the biggest mood killers.

When we make sex a priority, we also have to put some things on the back burner. This means being realistic and not trying to be Superwoman! That email can wait until tomorrow and the laundry can sit in the basket another day. We need time to build relationships, have fun with our spouses, and laugh with our children.

*Don't spread yourself so thin that your spouse just gets the leftovers.*

*How do I find my sexual self?*

Now that we have covered prioritizing our time and energy, there is one more area we need to cover. Your sexual self must be a large part of your self-image.

*How can sex be healing?*

*How does sex play a part in making us feel whole?*

God made sex to be so intimate that when we give sex the priority it deserves, it helps us feel like whole, complete people. This can fuel us for all the other things we do in life.

It will only happen though, if we accept this about ourselves:

- I am a sexual being.
- I was created to be passionate.
- I was designed to know and to be known.
- My life is not only about work and tasks; it is also about love, feeling and intimacy.

*What have I learned in this study that I am going to put into practice?*

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Make sex a priority! This week:

- Identify one practical thing you can do to give yourself more time to make love.
- Identify one practical thing you can do to give yourself more energy to make love.
- Identify one practical thing you can do to remind yourself that you are a sexual being.

## JOURNALING PROMPTS

*What is the biggest change that I can make to move the sexual side of my marriage forward?*

*Is my sexual self a part of my self-image? If I want to have a healthy sexuality, what words should I use to describe my sexual self?*

# RESOURCES

"4 Cool Statistics About Abstinence in the USA", November 30, 2012, <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2013/08/30/women-addicted-to-porn-stats>

Luke Gilkerson, "How Many Women Are Hooked on Porn? 10 Stats That May Shock You." August 30, 2013. <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2013/08/30/women-addicted-to-porn-stats>

All statistics taken from Sheila Wray Gregoire, *The Good Girl's Guide to Great Sex: And you thought bad girls have all the fun*. Zondervan, 2012.

- If your spouse is battling with pornography, check out Covenant Eyes - **[covenanteyes.com](http://covenanteyes.com)**
- Website and blog on sex (Sheila Wray Gregoire): **[tolovehonorandvacuum.com](http://tolovehonorandvacuum.com)**

Post-abortive healing - **[surrenderingthesecret.com](http://surrenderingthesecret.com)**

National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline - **800-656-HOPE**

# RESOURCES

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sheila Wray Gregoire has been married for 25 years and happily married for 20! The first few years with her husband, Keith, were tough, but over the years they've discovered how precious a good marriage is. The mom to two young adult daughters, she spends most of her life on the road with her husband in their RV, speaking around North America. But you can usually find her blogging everyday at *To Love, Honor and Vacuum* – where she talks a ton about sex!

Sheila loves bringing her Girl Talk event about sex and marriage to churches and MOPS groups! Email her at [sheila@sheilawraygregoire.com](mailto:sheila@sheilawraygregoire.com) for more information.

### *The Good Girl's Guide to Great Sex*

Billions of people have had sex. But how many have truly made love?

Sex was meant to be awesome in every way – physically, sure, but also spiritually and emotionally. Find out how to make it great and how to have a marriage that thrives! [tolovehonorandvacuum.com/books-2/the-good-girls-guide-to-great-sex](http://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/books-2/the-good-girls-guide-to-great-sex)

### *31 Days to Great Sex*

1 Couple. 31 Challenges. 1 Great Marriage!

Embark on the most fun research project you'll ever do with your husband. Learn to flirt more, to emotionally connect more, and yes – to spice things up! Find the 31 day challenge here.

[tolovehonorandvacuum.com/books-2/31-days-to-great-sex](http://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/books-2/31-days-to-great-sex)

### **Boost Your Libido Course**

Are you tired of always being tired? Do you wish that you could want sex the way your husband does?

What if you can? This video-based online course takes you through all the things that contribute to a woman's libido, and shows how you actually can take control of your sex drive – and enjoy your husband again!

Take 25% off the course when you use the coupon: **MOPS!**  
[tolovehonorandvacuum.com/boost-libido-course](http://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/boost-libido-course)

