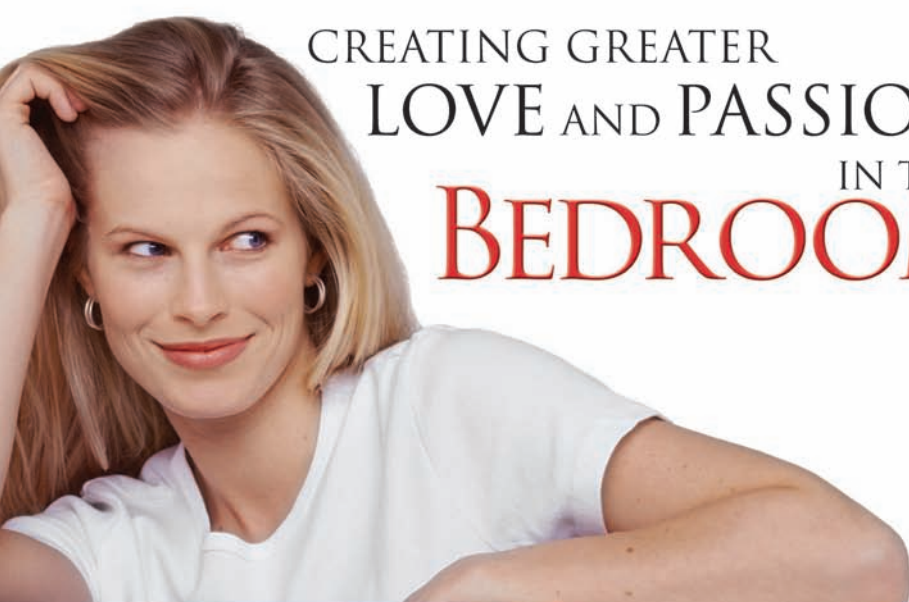




FOCUS<sup>®</sup>  
ON THE FAMILY

THE WAY TO  
**LOVE**  
YOUR  
WIFE

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CREATING GREATER  
LOVE AND PASSION  
IN THE  
**BEDROOM**

Clifford L. Penner, Ph.D.  
and Joyce J. Penner, M.N., R.N.

# The Way to Love Your Wife

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Creating Greater Love and Passion  
in the Bedroom

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*The Way to Love Your Wife*

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People's names and certain details of their stories have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

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— PREFACE —

Is mutual sexual satisfaction really possible for every couple? Yes—and you as a man can make the difference!

Invest in discovering greater love, passion, and intimacy in your marriage, and your sex life will soar. Your gains will far exceed your efforts.

God designed sex to be a vital, passionate expression of marriage. During the early centuries of the church's growth, sex was a passion to be suppressed. When the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s attempted to liberate people, it ended up degrading God's design.

Today, movements to build the family and to empower men to be men of God are being led by organizations such as Focus on the Family and Promise Keepers. We hope you'll make an additional promise: Commit yourself to read *The Way to Love Your Wife*—and to discovering greater love, passion, and intimacy with your wife.

Thank you and blessings,  
DR. CLIFFORD AND JOYCE PENNER





## — INTRODUCTION —

Coming from German Mennonite homes and communities in the Midwest and Canada, we were sexually uninformed and naive. The only instruction either of us received from our families came to Joyce two weeks before the wedding. It was basically three warnings:

1. The honeymoon would be awful.
2. She would be very tired.
3. She shouldn't let him use her. (She didn't! She used him.)

Fortunately, Joyce had just taken a “preparation for marriage” class at her Baptist nursing school. The topic of sexual adjustment was a significant part of that class. So Joyce was the one who told Cliff what she'd learned about sex in marriage from a Christian perspective.

That's not how it's supposed to happen, of course. When it comes to sex, the man has to be the expert.

At least that's what they'd *like* you to believe.

### *The Making of a “Manly” Man*

The false assumption that men are supposed to be the sexual experts has been passed from generation to generation.

Maybe it started for you around age five, when you were reprimanded for trying to peek into your sister's bedroom. You heard, “You're not supposed to do that.” But you also heard “Boys will be boys,” perhaps said with a tinge of pride.

In second grade you tried out sexual slang you'd heard from older guys. The adults frowned, but someone said, “He's practicing being a man.”

In fifth grade, when the girls were sent to another room to

learn about menstruation, you were curious and felt left out. How dare they know about something sexual that was a mystery to you!

The subtle training of your expected manly expertise continued. Your cousin, two years older, showed you his stash of magazines. It was the first time you'd seen naked women, and it triggered an avalanche of fear and excitement and confusion. Those pictures made your gut churn as it had never churned before; you couldn't seem to breathe even though you were breathing fast, and the lump in your throat almost made you choke. You didn't want to look, yet couldn't get enough.

In middle school, real sex education started. You watched "the movie." The teacher talked about reproduction—how eggs unite with sperm and how babies are born. *Gross!* You could hardly listen. If you were in a class with boys only, you wondered what the girls were talking about. If you were in a mixed group, you couldn't keep from giggling when the teacher used a word like *penis*, *vagina*, or *intercourse*.

Either way, you tried to be cool—pretending you already knew all about that sex stuff. Being in the know sexually was cool for guys. The most popular boy in your class seemed to know the most about sex, always having a story about a girl or a sexual joke to tell.

The jokes seemed to tell you a lot about male sexual expertise and what it means to be a man. They implied that the real man is the one with the biggest penis—women are putty in his hands, and they beg for more.

Then it happened: The girls all grew up during that summer between middle school and high school. You were self-conscious all the time, trying to be what you knew you weren't. You got used to acting like a cool guy—or you backed away from girls to avoid the pain of rejection.

Whichever road you traveled, you had something in common with every other guy—masturbation. Maybe for you it just felt good. Or it only felt good until it was over and the flood of shame and guilt hit, and you vowed you'd never do that again. Perhaps peers had taught you that anyone who masturbates is a loser; masturbation was a sign that you couldn't get the real thing—a woman.

Through it all, you kept getting the message: Men are sexual experts and sexual animals. "Go for as much as you can get!" said your friends and the TV shows and the Internet porn sites. "The further you get, the more of a man you are." Even if you were raised with the biblical instruction to save intercourse for marriage, you may have pushed for as much as you could get. You counted on the girl to slam on the brakes. Sometimes you hoped she would; other times you hoped she wouldn't.

After high school, you wanted to be the sexual man the world expected you to be—even as your faith and church may have called you to save yourself for your wife.

Eventually you connected with the woman of your dreams. She may have been your first serious girlfriend or your tenth. When you got married, she may have expected you to be the sexual expert, too.

But were you? If you continued to function as though only you knew best, you probably encountered problems. She may even have lost interest in sex altogether.

It's not easy being the expert, is it?

Worse, it doesn't work.

### *Can You Take Direction?*

Fortunately, there's another way.

Your sexual life can be wonderfully satisfying when you listen to your wife, honor her, and serve her by taking your cues from her. The

servant leader finds he has the most responsive wife and the most passionate sexual life.

The fact is, *the only possibility for a life of sexual happiness occurs when the man moves in the direction of the woman.*

That means letting go of the false teachings of your early years. It means connecting with your wife, because of how she was created and how she was trained to nurture, touch, care, and feel. When you listen, respond, and let the woman lead, it's amazing how fulfilling sex is for both of you.

This book is about discovering greater love, passion, and intimacy in married sex by breaking down the myths about men and sex. *The Way to Love Your Wife* will empower you to make the difference in your sex life with your wife, whether it needs major repair or just a little improvement.

A lot of men find it tough to take directions even when they're lost. How much more difficult to take directions from your wife about sex! Yet sex works better when the man lets the woman set the pace. Solomon, a model of the sexually satisfied man, let his bride lead their physical relationship—as you'll see in this book. And Christ, the model of unselfish love, gave up His rights for His bride, the church.

A vibrant sexual relationship requires work, but that work leads to a lot more fun and a lifetime of passion. That's what *The Way to Love Your Wife* is all about.

After more than 25 years of being sexual therapists and leading sex seminars throughout the United States and Canada, we're convinced that understanding what works best in the bedroom won't just slightly improve your marriage.

We think it'll make you dizzy with exhilaration.

# THIS ISN'T THE NCAA

Georgetown and UCLA are in the college basketball finals. The players are hyped, the coaches are hopeful and anxious. You, having put your dibs on Georgetown, have planned your day around the event.

Every time Georgetown scores, you're off the sofa with excitement. The tension builds. The fourth quarter ends with a tie, and the battle moves into overtime. Then a second overtime. Finally Georgetown scores, the buzzer sounds, the game is over, and your team is the winner.

*You* are a winner—*your* team won!

That night you get into bed with your wife, and you want to be a winner again.

In other words, you try to score.

Your wife's sexual responses are the baskets you make. The faster and more often you get a response, the more your excitement builds. You go for the hot spots—you manipulate and maneuver in order to gain points.

If there's no response, you get tense, frustrated. You're playing

by the rules, aren't you? It doesn't seem fair. As soon as you figure out the rules, she changes them!

The harder you try, the worse things get. You're desperate. After all, if you were a real man, you could bring your wife to orgasm, more than one orgasm. If you can't, she's a loser—and so are you.

## SEXUAL COMPETITIVENESS IN THE MAKING

### *Early Input*

When did this game of winning and losing at sex really start?

Your father may have been filled with pride when, at 21 months, you could catch the green sponge football or tap the keys on his computer. “He seems so coordinated,” Dad said, or, “He’s exceptionally bright!” Someday, he secretly hoped, you’d make the family proud by tackling for the NFL or developing the next “killer app” software.

A few years later it was T-ball, soccer, or using your own computer. You heard Daddy tell Grandpa on the telephone about your catch, your two runs, or your amazing skill at chess. The message was coming through loud and clear: To feel good about yourself, you have to score, hit, catch, run, block, and rush. You have to win!

Most girls, meanwhile, were spending their early years differently. While most boys were playing a competitive game or wishing they were, girls pursued less competitive, more process-oriented activities like dance or music. Some girls were active in sports, but tended to talk while they played—making it less of a battle and more of a social event.

Maybe you weren't into sports, either—and your parents weren't obsessed with winning. Still, you probably saw the compe-

tion around you and either disdained it or measured yourself against it. Chances are those comparisons helped to form your self-image.

### *Puberty and Beyond*

In middle school and high school, perhaps you continued to compete. Maybe you didn't go out for a team, but still went to games or saw them on TV. Whether you played or watched, the stakes were high. In everything from swimming to track to wrestling, the point was to score.

If you went to college, maybe you kept playing or watching. Or your interest may have shifted to other arenas—competing for the best grade in chemistry, the lead

role in the play, the prettiest girlfriend, the winning vote in a student body election. In the working world you started to vie for the highest pay, the most impressive title.

Competing, achieving, arriving, scoring, hunting, and winning are natural inclinations for men. It's no different when it comes to the sexual, romantic part of life.

**Competing, achieving,  
arriving, scoring,  
hunting, and winning  
are natural  
inclinations for men.**

### IS SCORING WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT?

We're amazed how often we hear this complaint from women: "It really bugs me when I'm cooking dinner or washing dishes and he comes and grabs me sexually."

What's that man trying to accomplish?



He's trying to be a winner. He thinks that to be a winner, he has to score; to score, he has to get her parts to respond.

That line of reasoning seems to start during dating. Guys ask each other questions like these:

"How far did you go?"

"How much did you get?"

"Did you get to third base?"

"Did you score?"

The assumption is that a man should push a woman as far as she will go. The further he can get her to go, the more of a winner he is.

Not true! Sex is not about achieving or scoring.

### *You Don't Win by Pushing for More*

Before marriage, the man who pushes sexually puts the woman in the role of limit-setter. If you pushed to touch breasts or genitals, she had to draw the line. If you crossed it, you taught her to resist. Even if arousal allowed her to go along, she may have experienced sadness and pain afterward. She felt

she'd given in to you.

A man who pushed for more before marriage is likely to continue the same approach after the wedding. He pushes for as much as he can get, yet senses that he isn't getting what really satisfies.

The goal-oriented approach won't lead to greater love, passion, or intimacy. Sex is about relating—not about conquering, achieving, or scoring.

**Sex is not about conquering, achieving, or scoring; sex is about relating.**

Ultimately, goal-oriented sex doesn't score anyway. It doesn't even get you to first base. True gratification doesn't come from how fast or how often you get your wife to agree, to get aroused, to get you aroused, to reach an orgasm, or to have more than one orgasm.

That kind of sex leaves one or both lovers disappointed. For example, when you grab your wife's sexual parts because that feels good to you or you hope to get her interested in sex, she'll be turned off. In contrast, the woman who's attended and listened to, who feels cherished and adored, who's affirmed and pleased will invite more touching and more intensity.

IT'S NOT WHETHER YOU WIN OR LOSE;  
IT'S HOW YOU PLAY THE GAME

Love, passion, and intimacy are never about winning or losing; they're about how you play the game. In sex, you need to go for the Mr. Congeniality Award rather than the Most Valuable Player.

Great sex requires a total shift in attitude from your natural instincts. A woman doesn't want to be a conquest or a win chalked up. Since the man is never truly satisfied unless the woman is, he has to move from his results-oriented approach to the process orientation of the woman. He has to learn to

**Love, passion, and intimacy are not about winning or losing; they're about how you play the game.**

soak in the beautiful movements and harmony of the symphony instead of going for the winning of his team.

That shift isn't easy. "It is natural for us to want to show affection.

But for some mysterious reason, we equate tenderness with sentimentality, weakness and vulnerability. We seem to be as fearful to give as to receive it,” wrote Leo Buscaglia.<sup>1</sup>

No wonder it’s such a struggle for a man to feel good about himself in his relationship with his wife and in his relationship with God. Men want to win, but relationships require a completely different approach.

You don’t have to be a slave to the drive to score. You don’t have to suffer the pressure, demands, and self-consciousness that results-oriented sex brings. You don’t have to detach yourself from the good feelings of the moment.

In our practice of sexual therapy, we find that as couples learn to focus on the process of pleasure—rather than on the results of stimulation—they feel less demand. They’re not merely satisfied; they’re deeply fulfilled.

That’s why, in the chapters that follow, we emphasize a focus on pleasure rather than on stimulation. If you want to have a mutually ecstatic sexual experience, you won’t be trying to have one. You’ll be attending to mutual pleasure.

To find out how that can happen in your marriage, read on.