

# Accepting Your Body as God's Gift & Deciding on Your Future Sexual Self-Identity

## 1. Accepting Your Body as God's Gift

Body image problems occur when there is a large gap between how you view your body and how you define the ideal body. When the way you look is different from the way you think you should look, then you will have difficulty accepting yourself and being free with your body sexually.

This exercise is intended to help you understand how you view your body and how your spouse views your body.

1.1 Describe your body as honestly as you can. Start with your general feelings about your body as you see it. (It may help if you imagine standing in front of a mirror in the nude) Talk about specific body parts starting with your head and hair and working down. Speak about how your body feels and looks, what you feel particularly good about. You may speak about what you wish were different but only in an equal or less proportion to what you like about your body.

If you are the listener, do not interrupt. Listen carefully. When the person describing their body has finished summarize what you have sensed and heard. When finished, ask for clarification on anything you have not understood.

When you've finished, you may reverse the roles of listener and describer.

Here are questions to discuss:

1.2 List anything you desire to change about your body that is within your capability to change. What would have to be overcome in order for change to take place?

1.3 What image of an "ideal" body have you held? Where did this image come from? How is this image realistic and unrealistic for your body-type? What do you want to keep and change about this image in order to aid self-acceptance?

1.4 Describe what it would be like to accept the body you have and be content: What would you tell yourself? What would it feel like? What kinds of actions would demonstrate your acceptance of your body?

## 2. Deciding on Your Future Sexual Self-Identity

You may be content with you present sexual self-identity and simply desire to enjoy who you are and have become or you may desire to change your sexual self-identity. One of the liberating truths of being made in God's image is that you can change. Once you understand who you are sexually and who you have become sexually from the multiple influences in your personal history as well as your own choices, you are in a position to choose who you want to become. This exercise is intended to help you begin to make that choice.

2.1 First, describe in metaphor how you presently see yourself as a sexual person:

What kind of car would describe you?

What kind of Olympic sport?

What color would describe your sexuality?

What music?

What (other) metaphor describes you best?

2.2 Now, describe in metaphor how you would like to see yourself as a sexual person in five years?

2.3 Next, describe any activity, thought, or feeling where you have experienced what you want to become. What did you do, think, or feel? What was different? What made that experience possible? Compliment and encourage one another as you share these successes.

2.4 As you think about becoming the sexual person you desire to become, what "jumps out to you" as most important from doing this exercise?