

# Intended *for* Pleasure

Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment  
in Christian Marriage

Ed Wheat, MD  
and Gaye Wheat

4<sup>TH</sup> EDITION



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## Foreword

We live in a culture that is saturated by sex. The Sexual Revolution that began in the 1960s challenged our country's Judeo-Christian norms and boundaries. The revolution has not just brought about personal sexual permissiveness but an unabashed wholesale promotion of sex. It has questioned and undermined the basic tenants of male and female sexuality.

But it was God, not man, who created sex. What God designed, man has distorted. What God sought to protect, man has perverted. The result is a vast wasteland of burned-out, strung-out, and stressed-out people who wonder not only what sex is all about but also whom to trust.

May I introduce you to my trusted friend Dr. Ed Wheat? He is no longer with us, but if he were I could take you to his modest office. There we would be told, "The doctor will be with you shortly." I'm sure Dr. Wheat was always running a little bit behind, because he cared about people. He cared not only for the body but also for the soul and spirit. I have no idea how many people were introduced to Jesus Christ by Dr. Wheat, but I can imagine he was late for an appointment more than once because he took time guiding a patient to understand faith in Jesus Christ. His care for the whole person is also why Dr. Wheat developed one of the largest cassette tape loan libraries in the world in the 1970s and 1980s. He not only wanted to introduce a person to Christ but also really wanted to help that person grow.

When Dr. Wheat would finally come in and take his seat behind his desk, you would instantly sense that this was a man you could talk to.

For one so intelligent and wise, he had a disarming way about him. You could talk to him about anything. He was one of us; he could be trusted. That's why the most intimate of all subjects, sex, could be addressed by "The Good Doctor."

In many ways, Ed Wheat was a spiritual pioneer, a prophet ahead of the times. He wrote *Intended for Pleasure* when he witnessed the beginning of the Sexual Revolution and understood the urgent need for a godly perspective on sex. His work provides a godly, straightforward, no baloney, biblical perspective of sex.

Over nearly three decades, FamilyLife has distributed thousands of copies of Dr. Wheat's book to premarried and married couples who have attended the Weekend to Remember. I believe it is the classic work in the Christian community on the subject of sexual intimacy in marriage. This updated and edited version is even better.

Ed Wheat was a pioneer and a prophet. But mostly he was just a really good man! I want to commend his work to you—it's an invaluable guide for married couples and also for young adults before they marry. Give a copy to your children when they are engaged; tell them to read the first hundred pages and save the others for a bit later . . . with the exception of chapter 14 on sexually transmitted diseases. That chapter needs to be read now.

Dr. Dennis Rainey  
President and CEO  
FamilyLife

## Preface to the Fourth Edition

It was my privilege to work with Dr. Ed Wheat, MD, for a number of years, and my joy to know Ed and Gaye Wheat as personal friends, mentors, and exemplars. I consider it an honor to be entrusted with the continuation of the good work God began through Dr. Wheat. *Intended for Pleasure* was revolutionary at the time of its first publication, and it has remained what might be the most concise yet comprehensive resource on the subject of sexual satisfaction in marriage. Dr. Wheat's compassionate eloquence and thorough knowledge were the foundation of his much-needed ministry and set the standard for me and for others who seek to guide couples to God's highest intentions for their marriages. Dr. Wheat's message is timeless. We have made minimal changes to address recent medical and cultural issues, but in essence, this book is the message God gave Dr. Wheat. The book speaks with Dr. Wheat's voice, the voice of a man whose heart, mind, and strength were fully devoted to the work God gave him to do. Special thanks are due to Gary Russell, MD, and his wife, Susan Russell, MD, for taking time out of their busy schedules to update the medical information; to Gordon Puls for his help, suggestions, and encouragement; to my wife, Joanne, for her research and suggestions; to Jeremy Cunningham for computer assistance; and to several of my graduate students at Baptist Bible College for researching and sharing insights into the fourth edition.

Preface to the Fourth Edition

The principles Ed Wheat, MD, developed for biblical counseling continue at the Love-Life Marriage and Family Counseling Center on the campus of Baptist Bible College in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. Dr. Wheat is now with the Lord.

Dow Pursley

## Preface to the Third Edition

The first edition of *Intended for Pleasure* came about almost unexpectedly; not because we wanted to write a book, but because we had information to communicate that could dramatically change lives, marriages, homes, and families.

As a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching family doctor I (Ed) found over the years that I was becoming more and more involved in marriage counseling because the need was so great. This led to speaking around the country and finally to producing a set of tapes that could be used by married Christian couples on sex technique and how to deal with sex problems in marriage.

The tapes were widely distributed, and it wasn't long before letters arrived daily from Christians who had heard the tapes and wanted to discuss their specific problems with a counselor who was biblically oriented and also had the medical knowledge to help them. There were so many similar questions and problems that I decided to write this book in an attempt to offer both biblical principles and medical solutions to problems of sexual adjustment that appear so frequently in marriage.

Still today a surprising number of couples are simply missing out on what God intended for them in the marriage relationship. Some are aware that the relationship with their marriage partner is not as fulfilling as it should be and they are actively seeking answers. Others don't seem to realize

that the physical relationship of a husband and wife should be mutually satisfying and pleasurable.

Today people talk openly about sex, but there is little accurate information available for what a married couple can expect from their sexual relationship. Very seldom in the secular media do you hear anything about how to lovingly satisfy the needs of your marriage partner or about how, if sex is to be fulfilling, it must be a part of a complex committed relationship with your spouse. Most Christian couples have never been taught what the Bible actually says about sex, nor, from the medical standpoint, how to fully enjoy what God has designed for man and wife.

So we have realized that the facts and the data in this book are still needed today. This updated edition has information that will benefit every married or soon-to-be-married person who is searching for a medically accurate presentation of sex in marriage within the framework of the Bible's teachings. While the subject matter is discussed quite frankly and with medical precision, it is treated as sacredly and carefully as the Bible itself treats the subject of sex in marriage. The promise of sexual fulfillment is available to any husband and wife who will choose to enter into God's plan for their marriage, and the purpose of this book is to show the way to that fulfillment.

Gaye and I have worked together with our good friend and colleague Dr. Dow Pursley in counseling and presenting seminars. Dr. Pursley has helped update all of the medical information in this new edition of the book and, with Drs. Ball, Valvo, and Hartzheim, has written the chapter on sexually transmitted diseases, a subject about which accurate information is needed today.

Through these pages we have tried to communicate to every reader our own sense of wonder and joy at what God can do in a marriage when it is committed to Him, with husband and wife possessing both the attitudes and the information necessary for a joyous relationship.

As you read this book, keep this one tremendous fact in mind: God Himself invented sex for our delight. It was His gift to us—*intended for pleasure*.

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## Intended for Pleasure

Scores of people—many of them Christians—come to my office looking for a medical solution to their particular marriage problem. While as an MD I can do a great deal to help medically, often there is a greater need for me to first communicate biblical information that can heal wounds, restore relationships, and establish the right foundation for healthy attitudes toward sex in marriage.

Knowing and understanding what God says about any phase of life leads to wholeness in that area; nowhere is this more necessary than in the sexual realm, where negative attitudes and distortions have virtually destroyed marriage relationships.

I think of the man who was deeply disturbed when God and sex were mentioned in the same discussion. To him, sex was altogether separate from his Christian life. The sexual relationship was an unholy activity in his opinion and yet he continued it with deep guilt feelings, which tarnished the experience for both him and his wife. His misconceptions of God's view of sex resulted in a hurried physical act without tenderness or pleasure.

Then I think of the woman who has been married twenty-five years and is still not sure what an orgasm is or whether she has ever experienced one . . . the husband and wife whose egos have been so wounded in the

bedroom that they barely speak to each other . . . the earnest Christian couple who have no serious problems but little joy in their sex relationship . . . and many other troubled people whose marriages are filled with misery rather than pleasure.

God has so much to say to all these through His Word! As a Christian physician, it is my privilege to communicate an important message to unhappy couples with wrong attitudes and faulty approaches to sex. The message, in brief, is this: You have God's permission to enjoy sex within your marriage. He invented sex; He thought it up to begin with. You can learn to enjoy it, and, husbands, you can develop a thrilling, happy marriage with "the wife of your youth." If your marriage has been a civil-war battlefield or a dreary wasteland, instead of a lovers' trysting place, all that can change. You see, God has a perfect plan for marriage, which we may choose to step into at any time, and the mistakes of the past can be dealt with and left behind.

The ancient counsel given by father to son, based on the wisdom of God in Proverbs 5:18–19, comes across just as clearly to the reader of today: "Let your fountain [your body parts that produce life] be blessed, and rejoice [or ecstatically delight] with the wife of your youth. . . . Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured [or filled] with her love" (NKJV).

It may surprise some of you to learn that the Bible speaks so openly, so joyously of sex in marriage. Almost every book of the Bible has something to say about sex, and Song of Solomon exquisitely depicts the love relationship in marriage. But Genesis, the book of beginnings, shows us most unforgettably what God has always thought about married love.

If we read the first three chapters of Genesis, where it is recorded that God created *male* and *female*, we find that "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). Interestingly, the creation of light was "good," the creation of land and sea was "good," and, likewise, the creation of vegetation, of fish and birds and animals was also "good." But not until he had created man and woman did God call for our attention with "Behold, it was *very* good."

With so many "good" things in the Garden and on earth, only one thing was *not good*: "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should

be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). In those few words God taught us that for man there is no substitute, no alternative plan, no better companion than his wife. The void that was originally caused by taking “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh” can be filled only by the presence of woman. Since a part of Adam went to make Eve, a man remains incomplete without his Eve.

God placed almost top priority on sexual union in marriage. We can see in the Genesis account that after God told man not to learn evil by experience (Gen. 2:17), His *second* teaching told man and woman how to relate in marriage: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). God had first divided the woman from the man when he made Eve. But now He commands them to be joined together again as one flesh. In this brief counseling session, even before any sin and its resulting selfishness had entered the human race, we find three basic commands:

First, when we marry, we should stop being dependent on our parents or our in-laws. We are to become completely dependent on our mates to satisfy *all* our needs.

Second, the man is the one who is responsible for holding the marriage together by “cleaving” to his wife. *Cleaving* in this sense means to be welded inseparably, so that each becomes a part of the other. Therefore, the man is to be totally committed to his one wife.

Third, we are commanded to be joined together in sexual union, to be *one flesh*.

The ideal situation God intended for us is shown by the blissful words “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:25). Adam and Eve could see each other as they really were, without shame, disappointment, or frustration. The sex relationship God had designed for them brought the blessings of companionship, unity, and delight—and note that this was some time *before* the command to bear children was given (Gen. 3:16).

God’s plan for our pleasure has never changed, and we realize this even more as we consider how we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps.

139:14). When we discover the many intricate details of our bodies that provide so many intense, wonderful physical sensations for husbands and wives to enjoy together, we can be sure that He intended us to experience full satisfaction in the marriage relationship.

Some have assumed that the sex act became an unholy practice when sin entered into the world. However, this is ruled out when we see that God's basic counsel on sex in the first chapters of Genesis was repeated by Jesus Christ to the religious leaders of His day: "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and [the two] shall be one flesh. . . . What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:6–9; Matt. 19:5–6). Jesus reemphasized this to His disciples in Mark 10:10–11, and again we find these commands reinforced in Ephesians 5:31.

As a matter of fact, the sex relationship in marriage receives such emphasis in the Scriptures that we begin to see it was meant not only to be a wonderful, continuing experience for the husband and wife, but it was also intended to show us something even more wonderful about God and His relationship with us. Ephesians 5:31–32 spells it out: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." *Thus the properly and lovingly executed and mutually satisfying sexual union is God's way of demonstrating to us a great spiritual truth.* It speaks to us of the greatest love story ever told—of how Jesus Christ gave Himself for us and is intimately involved with and loves the church (those who believe in Him). In this framework, the sexual relationship between two growing Christians can be intimate fellowship as well as delight.

This, of course, explains why the marriage union is the only way man and woman can truly enjoy the riches God has planned for them. Because the relationship is specifically designed to illustrate God's unending love for His people, sexual intercourse must be experienced in the context of a permanent, giving commitment. Anything less shortchanges those involved.

Some people have felt uncomfortable about sex because they somehow equate the sexual desire of men with the sexual drive of animals. They

should remember that animals breed according to instinct, with biological motivation. But man uses reason in choosing to have sexual relations. He is the only creature that has intercourse as a whole person. Husband and wife are the only creatures capable of gaining spiritual unity and a deeper knowledge of each other through the sexual relationship. Let us realize how the bodies of men and women are designed. Even in the sex act itself we are reminded that this is a relationship of persons, not just bodies, for it is no coincidence that man is the *only* creature of God's creation who relates sexually face-to-face.

Scripture suggests that just as we can know God, so we can know our husband or wife in a deeper, higher, more intimate way through the physical act of marriage. *Know* is the term used in the Bible to define our relationship to God; it also is the term used to designate the intimate union of husband and wife. "Adam knew Eve" (Gen. 4:1). Mary, speaking of her pregnancy in light of her virginity, said, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). Matthew 1:25 says that Joseph "knew her not" until after the birth of Christ. The sex relationship offers no more cherished pleasure than this *knowing* of the one you love. With the understanding that our marriage relationship portrays the truths of our relationship with God, we can become free as never before to fully express our love for our husband or wife through the dynamic opportunity of the sex act.

God's viewpoint comes forth vigorously in 1 Corinthians 7:3–5 where the husband and wife are told they actually *defraud* (*apostereo*, the strongest New Testament Greek word meaning to cheat somebody out of something that is rightfully theirs) one another when they refuse to give physical pleasure and satisfaction to their mate. The only activity that is to break regular sexual relations is prayer and fasting for some specific cause, and this is to be only by mutual consent for a very limited time.

Although sin did enter the human race in the Garden and brought with it the possibility of perversion of every good thing (including sex), God's plan for His beloved creation has continued to operate through the provision of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. By faith, people can choose God's way! It is true that our culture is saturated with sex distorted into lust, and desire has been twisted and deformed, until it appears as a beast running loose in the streets, destroying God-given boundaries. *Nevertheless*,

*our marriage bed is a holy place in the sight of God.* We must be careful to maintain this viewpoint concerning sex in marriage, for it is God's. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." We need to treasure and share with our children these positive values God Himself teaches in Scripture concerning the love/sex relationship, always placing sex in marriage in an entirely different light from sex outside of marriage. Sex apart from marriage is spelled out as obviously wrong. Sex in marriage is wonderfully right. Let us never forget it!

I cannot begin to describe the dimensions of the marriage relationship as experienced by the Christian couple who have a total commitment to Jesus Christ and, flowing from that, a realization of their own security in spiritual and physical oneness; who have an excitement found only in each other, knowing this is for as long as they live. This genuine, total oneness and completeness somehow cannot be explained to the one who has not yet experienced it. When this kind of relationship exists, you will both want to praise our Lord many times and have communion with Him in prayer, each thanking Him for the other and the complete love you share.

Intended for pleasure—yes, in the fullest meaning of the word. And even then, language does not convey what God has prepared for us! When Sarah heard that she was going to become pregnant at ninety years of age, she laughed and then made this statement to herself: "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" (Gen. 18:12 NKJV). Sarah was given to us as an example of one of the most godly women (1 Peter 3:6), and one of her secret concerns was whether the sexual union between her and Abraham in their golden years would produce pleasurable feelings. It is God's will and design, both then and now, that the sexual experience for a man and woman in marriage produce wonderful feelings, for God intended sexual relations for our great pleasure.