



**SEX TEACHING
RUBRIC**

HOW THIS RUBRIC WORKS

Our rubric asks if books that tackle questions about marriage and sex reflect the basics of a biblical sexual ethic: that sex is mutually pleasurable, that sex is intimate, and that the relationship is faithful.

The rubric is organized around these three principles. Here's how the scoring works:

RAW SCORE	MEDIATING SCORES	CATEGORY SCORES	SCORE INTERPRETATION
0-23	5 or more items rated 0	-	Actively Harms Women's Sexuality
24-32	-	All categories must receive a passing grade	Does not actively promote healthy messages about women's sexuality, but also does not largely promote proven harmful messages.
33-48	No more than 2 items rated 0 or 1	All categories must have at least 1 item rated 4	Promotes a Healthy View of Women's Sexuality

Unfortunately, the fact that a book claims to be Christian does not mean that it will necessarily talk about sex in a healthy, biblical way. As you'll see from our scorecard, our evangelical bestsellers score across a wide spectrum. Not every Christian book has the same view of sex. We need to use discernment with what resources we recommend.

We've already applied our rubric to several evangelical bestsellers. Our rubric only covers helpful and harmful teachings about sex; we did not analyze any teachings about marriage and do not make any statements about books' help or harm in that area. We invite you to use this rubric when evaluating other resources—or even for making sure that you are teaching a healthy view of sex! We hope that by using this rubric as an objective outside measure, more churches, counselors, and couples will be able to accurately identify harmful information and instead point people towards a Christ-centered view of intimacy.

INFIDELITY / LUST

- 1.** Does the book acknowledge that the blame for a husband's affair or porn use lies at the feet of the husband, or does it, at least in part, blame the wife?
- 2.** Does the book acknowledge that porn use must be dealt with before a healthy sexual relationship can be built, while acknowledging that very few porn habits today are caused by a wife's refusal to have sex, or does it suggest that the remedy to a porn habit is more frequent sexual activity?
- 3.** Does the book acknowledge the effect of pornography on men's self-perception, sex drives, and sexual function, or does it ignore porn's harm to so many marriages?
- 4.** Does the book frame lust as something both spouses may struggle with, even if men tend to struggle more, or does it state that since all men struggle with lust, it can't be defeated, and the only way to combat lust is for the woman to have sex more and dress modestly?

SEX AS PLEASURE

- 5.** Does the book acknowledge women's orgasm and women's enjoyment of the physical aspects of sex, or does it imply that most or all women do not enjoy sex?
- 6.** Does the book frame sex as something a woman will anticipate and look forward to, or does it frame sex as something she will tend to dread?
- 7.** Does the book describe men's sexual appetite as healthy but also containable and controllable, or are men's sexual needs portrayed as ravenous, insatiable, and constant?
- 8.** Does the book acknowledge that in a large minority of marriages, the wife has a higher libido than her husband, or does it oversimplify, implying that all or almost all husbands have higher libidos than their wives?

MUTUALITY

- 9.** Does the book explain that sex has many purposes, including intimacy, closeness, fun, and physical pleasure for both, or does it portray sex as being primarily about fulfilling his physical need?
- 10.** Does the book stress personal appearance and hygiene equally for both parties, or is far more expected from wives than from husbands, and is it implied that if she does not maintain a level of attractiveness, he may have an affair?
- 11.** Does the book discuss the importance of foreplay and a husband's role in his wife's pleasure, or does the book ignore a husband's responsibility to help his wife feel pleasure and state that sex shouldn't take very long?
- 12.** Does the book include reasons why a woman may legitimately say, "not tonight, honey?" and discuss the concept of marital rape, or does the book say that a woman refusing sex is a sin, or fail to recognize rape within its anecdotes?

INFIDELITY / LUST

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2. Does the book acknowledge that porn use must be dealt with before a healthy sexual relationship can be built, while acknowledging that very few porn habits today are caused by a wife's refusal to have sex, or does it suggest that the remedy to a porn habit is more frequent sexual activity?

3. Does the book acknowledge the effect of pornography on men's self-perception, sex drives, and sexual function, or does it ignore porn's harm to so many marriages?

4. Does the book frame lust as something both spouses may struggle with, even if men tend to struggle more, or does it state that since all men struggle with lust, it can't be defeated, and the only way to combat lust is for the woman to have sex more and dress modestly?

ACTIVELY TEACHES HARMFUL BELIEFS	PERPETUATES HARMFUL BELIEFS	DOESN'T REALLY ADDRESS THE ISSUE	TEACHES SOMETHING HELPFUL	COMBATS THE HARMFUL BELIEFS AND TEACHES SOMETHING HELPFUL
0	1	2	3	4
The book says that affairs and/or porn use are caused by a woman not having enough sex.	The book says that a wife not having enough sex will make a husband tempted to have an affair or watch porn.	The book does not mention a husband's risk of having an affair or watching porn.	The book talks about how affairs and porn use can have causes other than a wife's refusal to have sex.	The book mentions affairs and watching porn and frames it as the husband's sin.
The book paints the wife having sex as being a prerequisite for recovery from porn use.	The book says that having sex frequently and/or more adventurously will help him fight the temptation to watch porn, while acknowledging that porn use usually predates marriage.	The book does not mention the reasons for porn use.	The book acknowledges that there are roots to porn use other than a wife's refusal to have sex, and these must be addressed.	The book acknowledges that there are roots to porn use other than a wife's refusal to have sex, and these must be addressed.
The book implies that men's porn use is normal, and women should understand and not be upset about it.	The book discusses sexual dysfunction or libido differences but does not discuss the problem of men's porn use.	The book doesn't tackle sexual dysfunction or libido issues.	The book acknowledges the widespread problem of men's porn use and discusses the damage this does to wives' emotions.	The book acknowledges the widespread problem of porn use and discusses problems that it causes to at least two of the following: men's libidos; sexual function; personalities; and self-perception. It also acknowledges the deep damage done to wives.
The book explicitly says that all or almost all men struggle with lust, and also says that women are largely responsible for this struggle because of how they dress, how they act, or because they fail to have frequent enough sex.	The book implies that man's struggle with lust is universal, while not mentioning a woman's struggle.	The book does not address lust.	The book states that not all men struggle with lust and, if they do, it's not a woman's fault.	The book talks about how both men and women may struggle with lust, but also states that this is not a universal problem.

SEX AS PLEASURE

	ACTIVELY TEACHES HARMFUL BELIEFS	PERPETUATES HARMFUL BELIEFS	DOESN'T REALLY ADDRESS THE ISSUE	TEACHES SOMETHING HELPFUL	COMBATS THE HARMFUL BELIEFS AND TEACHES SOMETHING HELPFUL
	0	1	2	3	4
5. Does the book acknowledge women's orgasm and women's enjoyment of the physical aspects of sex, or does it imply that most or all women do not enjoy sex?	The book implies or states that most/all women do not enjoy sex.	The book never mentions a woman's pleasure.	The book acknowledges that women may feel pleasure and reach orgasm, but frames this as a secondary benefit. The main benefit is the husband receiving pleasure from the wife receiving pleasure.	The book acknowledges that women can and do reach orgasm.	The book acknowledges that women can receive as much pleasure from sex as men can, and that the sexual enjoyment is important to women in its own right.
6. Does the book frame sex as something a woman will anticipate and look forward to, or does it frame sex as something she will tend to dread?	The book describes sex as something women dread or view as an imposition.	The book states that a woman will have a great deal of difficulty becoming aroused and implies that she will not look forward to sex.	Women thinking about sex beforehand is not described in the book.	The book has anecdotes describing or states that women are capable of anticipating and looking forward to sex.	Women fantasizing about sex with their husbands and actively looking forward to sex is described as normal and healthy.
7. Does the book describe men's sexual appetite as healthy but also containable and controllable, or are men's sexual needs portrayed as ravenous, insatiable, and constant?	The book states that men's sexual appetites are so tied to their personhood that even an occasional turn down will be devastating and will endanger his marriage and self-image.	The book states that women will never be able to understand her husband's sexual appetite and that his sexual needs are constant, ravenous, and insatiable.	The book describes men as tending to have a higher libido than women do but does not state that sexual fulfillment is men's primary need or that women will not be able to understand men's sexual appetite.	The book describes that men tend to be more visual, that men tend to feel a more intense need for sex, and are simultaneously able to practice self control.	The book describes men's sex drives as being variable from person to person but describes the fact that men tend to be more visual and tend to have more of an intense drive for sex. Differences in libido are described and men's ability to have self-control and contain their sexual appetites are lauded.
8. Does the book acknowledge that in a large minority of marriages, the wife has a higher libido than her husband, or does it oversimplify, implying that all or almost all husbands have higher libidos than their wives?	The book ignores high drive women and states or implies that all husbands have higher libidos than their wives.	The book gives a caveat saying that some women have higher libidos than their husbands but then ignores these higher drive wives and only discusses marriages in which the husband has the higher libido.	The book never mentions libido differences.	The book discusses marriages where the woman has the higher libido, and mentions the sexual frustration that women may feel.	The book does not treat marriages where women have the higher sex drive as a strange aberration, but as quite common. It also mentions the problem of sexual frustration that women may feel in these marriages.

MUTUALITY

	ACTIVELY TEACHES HARMFUL BELIEFS	PERPETUATES HARMFUL BELIEFS	DOESN'T REALLY ADDRESS THE ISSUE	TEACHES SOMETHING HELPFUL	COMBATS THE HARMFUL BELIEFS AND TEACHES SOMETHING HELPFUL
	0	1	2	3	4
<p>9. Does the book explain that sex has many purposes, including intimacy, closeness, fun, and physical pleasure for both, or does it portray sex as being primarily about fulfilling his physical need?</p>	<p>The only explicit reason given for sex is for the man's physical release.</p>	<p>The book describes sex as being beneficial for men physically but also mentions benefits to his mental and emotional health but does not describe benefits from sex for women.</p>	<p>The book talks in general about how sex helps bring the couple closer, but does not mention any benefits to the woman herself.</p>	<p>The book talks about sex being beneficial for the wife for at least some of the following reasons: lowering her stress; helping her sleep; helping her feel pleasure in her own right.</p>	<p>The book talks about the benefits of sex to the husband, the wife, and the couple relationship, for reasons including, but not limited to, all of the following: his pleasure; her pleasure; mental or physical well-being; enhanced intimacy and closeness.</p>
<p>10. Does the book stress personal appearance and hygiene equally for both parties, or is far more expected from wives than from husbands, and is it implied that if she does not maintain a level of attractiveness, he may have an affair?</p>	<p>The book talks about the importance of a wife keeping up her appearance without talking about the husband also keeping up his explicitly for her sake, and/or states that he may have an affair if she doesn't keep her appearance up.</p>	<p>The book talks about the requirements for physical appearance and hygiene for both spouses, but the requirements for the husband are easy and attainable, but the requirements for the wife are far greater.</p>	<p>The book has similar requirements for both men and women, but there is greater emphasis on the wife's appearance.</p>	<p>The book does not mention appearance or hygiene.</p>	<p>The book talks about how both spouses should keep up their appearance and keep up their hygiene in a non-shaming manner.</p>
<p>11. Does the book discuss the importance of foreplay and a husband's role in his wife's pleasure, or does the book ignore a husband's responsibility to help his wife feel pleasure and state that sex shouldn't take very long?</p>	<p>The book explicitly says that sex never takes a long time or is always fast.</p>	<p>The book does not mention foreplay or the husband's responsibility for helping his wife feel pleasure.</p>	<p>The book does not talk about sexual pleasure or sexual response.</p>	<p>The book explains that a wife will require her husband's attention to receive sexual pleasure.</p>	<p>The book frames sex as something which should be mutual, with both spouses trying to bring each other sexual pleasure.</p>
<p>12. Does the book include reasons why a woman may legitimately say, "not tonight, honey?" and discuss the concept of marital rape, or does the book say that a woman refusing sex is a sin, or fail to recognize rape within its anecdotes?</p>	<p>The book explicitly states that a wife refusing sex is a sin, or gives an example of marital rape without calling it marital rape.</p>	<p>The book implies or states that in marriage, a wife should give her husband sex when he wants it, regardless of what she is feeling with no or very few exceptions.</p>	<p>The book does not deal with this issue.</p>	<p>The book gives anecdotes when the wife says no to sex in a positive way, or acknowledges that there will be times when the wife won't have sex, and that's okay.</p>	<p>The book gives examples where refusing sex isn't just okay, but is actually the right thing to do. The book uses the words "rape", "consent", or "sexual abuse" in the context of marriage, and teaches women how to recognize them.</p>



**SEX TEACHING
RESULTS CHART**

HOW THE BESTSELLING CHRISTIAN BOOKS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND SEX, READ BY WOMEN, TREAT WOMEN'S SEXUALITY

MARRIAGE BOOKS

		AVERAGE FOR ALL BOOKS <small>(excludes control book)</small>	SECULAR CONTROL BOOK	7 PRINCIPLES FOR MAKING MARRIAGE WORK	LOVE & RESPECT	FOR WOMEN ONLY	HIS NEEDS, HER NEEDS	POWER OF A PRAYING WIFE	THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE	BOUNDARIES IN MARRIAGE	SACRED MARRIAGE
		24.26	47	0	11	11	15	30	42	42	
INFIDELITY / LUST	1. Does the book acknowledge that the blame for a husband's affair or porn use lies at the feet of the husband, or does it, at least in part, blame the wife?	2.31	4	0	2	0	4	2	4	4	
	2. Does the book acknowledge that porn use must be dealt with before a healthy sexual relationship can be built, while acknowledging that very few porn habits today are caused by a wife's refusal to have sex, or does it suggest that the remedy to a porn habit is more frequent sexual activity?	1.92	4	0	2	0	3	2	4	4	
	3. Does the book acknowledge the effect of pornography on men's self-perception, sex drives, and sexual function, or does it ignore porn's harm to so many marriages?	1.92	4	0	1	1	1	2	3	2	
	4. Does the book frame lust as something both spouses may struggle with, even if men tend to struggle more, or does it state that since all men struggle with lust, it can't be defeated, and the only way to combat lust is for the woman to have sex more and dress modestly?	1.69	4	0	0	1	3	2	3	4	
SEX AS PLEASURE	5. Does the book acknowledge women's orgasm and women's enjoyment of the physical aspects of sex, or does it imply that most or all women do not enjoy sex?	2.58	4	0	2	2	0	3	4	3	
	6. Does the book frame sex as something a woman will anticipate and look forward to, or does it frame sex as something she will tend to dread?	2.38	4	0	1	0	0	3	3	4	
	7. Does the book describe men's sexual appetite as healthy but also containable and controllable, or are men's sexual needs portrayed as ravenous, insatiable, and constant?	1.50	4	0	0	0	0	3	4	4	
	8. Does the book acknowledge that in a large minority of marriages, the wife has a higher libido than her husband, or does it oversimplify, implying that all or almost all husbands have higher libidos than their wives?	1.75	4	0	0	1	1	3	4	4	
MUTUALITY	9. Does the book explain that sex has many purposes, including intimacy, closeness, fun, and physical pleasure for both, or does it portray sex as being primarily about fulfilling his physical need?	2.54	4	0	1	1	1	4	2	4	
	10. Does the book stress personal appearance and hygiene equally for both parties, or is far more expected from wives than from husbands, and is it implied that if she does not maintain a level of attractiveness, he may have an affair?	1.92	3	0	0	1	1	4	3	4	
	11. Does the book discuss the importance of foreplay and a husband's role in his wife's pleasure, or does the book ignore a husband's responsibility to help his wife feel pleasure and state that sex shouldn't take very long?	2.58	4	0	1	4	1	1	4	3	
	12. Does the book include reasons why a woman may legitimately say, "not tonight, honey?" and discuss the concept of marital rape, or does the book say that a woman refusing sex is a sin, or fail to recognize rape within its anecdotes?	1.15	4	0	1	0	0	1	4	3	

HOW THE BESTSELLING CHRISTIAN BOOKS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND SEX, READ BY WOMEN, TREAT WOMEN'S SEXUALITY

SEX BOOKS

	AVERAGE FOR ALL BOOKS <small>(excludes control book)</small>	SECULAR CONTROL BOOK 7 PRINCIPLES FOR MAKING MARRIAGE WORK	EVERY MAN'S BATTLE	ACT OF MARRIAGE	SHEET MUSIC	INTENDED FOR PLEASURE	INTIMATE ISSUES	GIFT OF SEX
	24.26	47	9	18	27	29	41	47
INFIDELITY / LUST	2.31	4	4	0	0	2	4	4
	1.92	4	0	0	0	2	4	4
	1.92	4	3	1	1	2	4	4
	1.69	4	0	0	1	2	2	4
SEX AS PLEASURE	2.58	4	1	4	4	4	4	4
	2.38	4	0	4	4	4	4	4
	1.50	4	0	1	1	2	3	4
	1.75	4	0	0	3	1	4	4
MUTUALITY	2.54	4	0	4	4	4	4	4
	1.92	3	0	0	4	1	3	4
	2.58	4	1	4	4	4	4	4
	1.15	4	0	0	1	1	1	3

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