



Shifting into Sexual Gear



Change Me, Lord

Have you ever wondered where your imagination came from? Well, it was created and given to you by God, which means it's a very good thing. As far as anyone knows, no other species created by God has the ability to imagine—only humans.

Since you were created in His image, it's conceivable that God gave you your imagination because He has one, too. When God was busy creating the world, He may have used His imagination to first, imagine what He would create, then spoke His thoughts into existence.¹

What do you suppose your imagination is good for? Do you think it's okay to use it to fantasize? For many, it seems we can't possibly be allowed to use it for fantasy; such a thing just can't be spiritual. It must be too "worldly" to be a godly idea, even if it isn't an outright sin. Well, let's examine this issue and see what we can learn about this concept from a godly perspective.

In *Webster's Dictionary*, *fantasy* is defined as "unrestrained imagination." You might think of this word like you would daydreaming, anticipation, and even rehearsing what the future might bring.

Fantasy God's Way

Now let's bring God into this area for a moment. Because we cannot see Him, we use our imaginations and create pictures in our minds of what God might look and sound like. Since there weren't any cameras during the time of Jesus, we don't have any idea of what He really looked like, yet we try to imagine His appearance in our minds.

Through the centuries, much of Christian meditation has centered on imagining the teachings of Jesus, what it was like to sit with Him by the Sea of Galilee and listen to His parables about the Kingdom of Heaven. We close our eyes and picture Him pointing toward a flock of sheep and explaining, "I am the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for His sheep." I sense God must smile when He sees and hears us spending our time imagining and fantasizing about Heaven. After all, He created Heaven as a place where we will spend eternity with Him! Although there is no way we can possibly imagine all the details of God's Heaven, we *fantasize* about what it will look like when we get there and what God will have for us to do.


The point to be made here about fantasy is *don't let what the world has taught you about fantasy warp your view and cause you to think negatively about it*. As Christians, we tend to believe that fantasizing about sexual encounters with our spouse can be wrong or dirty. Yet, when you study *Song of Solomon*, you begin to see reasons why God seems to have no problem with you *anticipating* sexual encounters with your mate.

By reading through this book of Scripture, you will find times when Shulamith fantasized about being with her husband Solomon as she used her imagination to re-create his appearance in her mind. When Shulamith used her mind to focus on her husband's appearance, she usually became sexually excited. Here's an example of how she did this.

In chapter 5, verses 2 through 10, we read how Shulamith is awakened by Solomon in the middle of the night, trying to get into her bedchamber. You see, back in Solomon's time, a royal couple often had separate bedrooms. Solomon comes to her during the night, tries to open her door, but finds that it is locked. When Shulamith realizes what is happening, she begins making excuses of why she doesn't want to get out of bed. Her lover comes to her, only to be met with apathy and indifference.²

Because she takes so long to open the door, Solomon grows impatient and leaves. After Shulamith discovers he has gone, she becomes sad and realizes she is disappointed he didn't stay.

One of the first things we realize from this passage is that *every* marriage has conflict. Even this one! Dr. Craig Glickman states in his book, *Solomon's Song of Love*:



*You use your
imagination to
create pictures in
your mind of what
God looks like.*

Perhaps the most valuable lesson from these [verses] is simply that they are included. Even in the ideal romantic love the song portrays, lovers encounter disappointment in the inevitable ebb and flow of emotional intensity. Realistic expectations require every couple to anticipate the same rhythms of life, to respond maturely to them, and to not allow appreciation for each other to wane.³

Shulamith clearly didn't appreciate Solomon's desire to be with her. Although she didn't want to be bothered with Solomon initially, by the time she made her way to the door, the thought of being with her lover excited her. However, by the time she gets there, she has become aroused at the thought of being with Solomon, only to be disappointed by finding Solomon has left her.⁴ It's not clear *why* he left. Maybe it was her words; maybe it was the tone of her voice.

Once she discovers he has gone, she begins *fantasizing* about Solomon, her lover. She pictures his body in her mind. She recalls vividly why she cherishes him. It's interesting to note that she remembers his physical features. There is no mention of his character here. It is all about his body.

Then in chapter 5, verses 10 through 16, you can see how Shulamith used her imagination to picture her lover in her mind.

vs. 10 My lover is dark and dazzling, better than ten thousand others!

vs. 11 His head is finest gold, his wavy hair is black as a raven.

vs. 12 His eyes sparkle like doves beside springs of water; They are set like jewels washed in milk.

vs. 13 His cheeks are like gardens of spices giving off fragrance. His lips are like lilies, perfumed with myrrh.

vs. 14 His arms are like rounded bars of gold, set with beryl. His body is like bright ivory, glowing with lapis lazuli.

vs. 15 His legs are like marble pillars set in sockets of finest gold. His posture is stately, like the noble cedars of Lebanon.

vs. 16 His mouth is sweetness itself; he is desirable in every way. Such, O women of Jerusalem, is my lover, my friend.

Have you ever found yourself fantasizing about your husband in this way? Now you know it's okay! It's scriptural!

Shulamith “replayed” in her mind how good Solomon looked, smelled, and tasted, and she was aroused as she pondered their next time for lovemaking. The world has probably led you to believe *fantasy* is wrong. However, when you read Shulamith’s words in Scripture, you come to understand how fantasy, and your imaginations, can be very powerful tools to help you “picture” how wonderful your husband really is and to build your anticipation and arousal for him for the next time you can be together intimately.



*By fantasizing,
you are preparing
for the next
moment you can
share together.*

We All Fantasize

God created sex and gave it as a gift to married couples. He is pleased when His children choose to spend time with each other--whether it's times of sexual intimacy or just being together. When you are apart from one another, He gives you permission to *fantasize* about each other because He gifted you with your imagination.

Many things you do throughout the day will remind you of your mate and how you wish you could be together with him. This, too, is *fantasizing!* Remember, God said two shall become one and in a mysterious way, He has *glued* the two of you together physically, mentally and spiritually in order to sustain you when you are apart from each other. Part of the “sustenance” that nurtures your marriage is the sexual relationship you experience with your spouse. Christian sex therapist, Dr. Douglas Rosenau states in his book, *A Celebration of Sex*:

Your mind, with the ability to create and store information, is the central part of imagining and experiencing erotic pleasure. That is what sexual fantasy is all about: your mind, images that are paired with the sexual excitement, and your imagination to give them wings.⁵

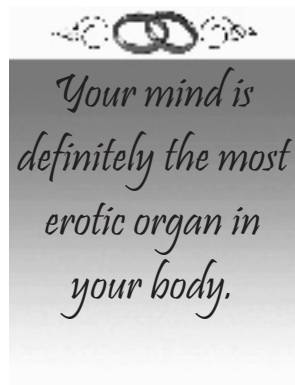
It seems that an active fantasy life can help you build a great sex life with your mate.⁶ Pairing up your mind with images of sexual excitement can bring vitality, enjoyment and refreshment to your relationship. Whenever you think about a sexual encounter you've had with your husband, or one you wish to create in the future, thank God for the ability to do so. He wants you to enjoy this erotic love He created--even when the two of you are apart.

Whether this love is expressed physically, or simply experienced in your mind due to circumstances, God is pleased when you use your imagination to create and recreate wonderful

moments with your spouse. Utilizing fantasy and anticipation prepares you for the next moments you can share together.

A Warning about Fantasy

There are definitely some types of fantasy that are sinful, and others are unwise. Realize that if your daydreams or fantasies are not centered on sinful activities, such as imagining a relationship with someone other than your mate, then the act of imagination itself is not sinful. Here's how author Karen Linamen shares a warning about fantasy in her book, *Pillow Talk*:



[T]he Bible speaks out strongly regarding lustful thoughts and vain imaginations...It doesn't take a lot of analysis, for example, to figure out that romantic or sexual daydreams about someone other than your spouse are displeasing to God...Jesus simply couldn't have said it any plainer: "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:27–28 NIV).

...It's a strict standard, I agree, especially living in a world where titillating images confront us at every turn.⁷

Dr. Douglas Rosenau explains how your mind and imagination are vehicles of eroticism that can take you most anywhere. Your mind is definitely the most erotic organ in your body.⁸ However, listen to his warning about fantasy in your marriage from his book, *A Celebration of Sex*:

[O]ur fantasies can distort and damage our marriages if we take them outside the lines and bring other people or the unrealistic into our lovemaking.⁹

What is fascinating about our mind is that we have the ability to use it in mighty ways when fantasizing about our mate. We can imagine some very powerful, as well as erotic, things we could do with our mate in the future, as well as enjoying "once again" things that the two of us experienced in our past. As Dr. Rosenau explains in his book, our mind and our imagination are vehicles of eroticism that can take us most anywhere. Our mind is definitely the most erotic organ in our body.

Karen Linamen continues by discussing the problems of fantasizing, or dwelling on the faults and failures of your husband. Be aware that the temptation to imagine impossible situations with your husband can cause you to despair, too. This would mean times of imagining things that would never happen, or thinking about things that could never come true. These "temptations" cause you to use your "mental energies" in unhealthy and nonproductive ways. Here's how she expresses this point:

Let's say I'm in the mood for a romantic fantasy. I spend an hour daydreaming about a romantic encounter with a man who woos me with flowers and delights in fulfilling my every unspoken sexual need. Because I know better than to fantasize about someone other than my husband, I plaster his face on my dreams. I tell myself my fantasy is about my husband, but in reality, the man in my mind bears no resemblance to the man who sleeps in my bed

each night, who happens to think that flowers are a waste of money, and who has never been particularly good at reading my mind and discerning those “unspoken sexual needs.” This kind of fantasy can lead to disappointment and disillusionment when the real man in my life continues to fall short of his counterpart who lives in my mind.¹⁰

Now let's imagine some legitimate places to enjoy fantasy within marriage. As you remember the last time you kissed your husband and the warmth of his embrace, it brings to your mind the love you share. Hearing a favorite song on the radio can take you back to a special candlelight dinner the two of you shared. Recalling a special place the two of you made love can cause you to desire to return to that location so you can create another special memory.

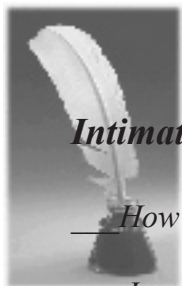
Did you notice how Shulamith “replayed” in her mind how good Solomon looked, smelled, and tasted, and how she was aroused as she pondered their next time for lovemaking in the verses above? Imagining caused Shulamith to desire to take Solomon back to the vineyards where they once shared their love for one another. God shows us through Shulamith's example that our mind is a precious gift and a tool to use to enhance our lovemaking.

The next time you think about a sexual encounter you've had with your husband, or one you wish to create in the future, thank God for this ability to do so. He desires for you to enjoy this erotic love He created—even in your mind when the two of you are apart. Whether this love is expressed physically, or simply experienced in your mind due to circumstances that keep you apart, know that God is pleased when you use your mind to create and recreate wonderful moments with your spouse.

Utilizing fantasy and anticipation prepares you for the next moments you can share together. Allow Shulamith to be your role model as you thank God for His gift of fantasy and “unrestrained imagination.” It is a gift that can enhance your relationship as you enjoy “old treats” and create “new ones” for your future together. It's God's gift to you both!



Transforming Activities - Chapter 3



Intimate Moments

___ How do you see yourself as a lover?

___ Is sex something you view as positive or negative?

___ List two “neutral or negative” thoughts you have about your sexual relationship. Pray and ask the Lord to show you how to take these and make them positive. *How could these changes improve your sexual relationship?*



Here's a verse from God's Word to encourage you.

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world,
but let God transform you into a new person by
changing the way you think. Then you will know
what God wants you to do, and you will know how
good and pleasing and perfect His will really is.
Romans 12:2 (New Living Translation)*

As you meditate on this verse, consider praying this prayer over your husband.

A Prayer for My Husband

*Lord, I pray my husband will be transformed
by Your Word. May he take every thought captive
so he won't conform to the world's thinking.
Help him think scripturally as he learns how
good, how pleasing, and perfect Your will is for his life.*

Romans 12:2; 11 Corinthians 10:5



The 3 S's Activity: Spouse, Self, and Sex

Every day for a week, list one positive comment about your spouse, yourself, and your sex life. This is one more way to transform your mindset.

Day 1

Spouse _____
Self _____
Sex _____

Day 2

Spouse _____
Self _____
Sex _____

Day 3

Spouse _____
Self _____
Sex _____

Day 4

Spouse _____
Self _____
Sex _____

Day 5

Spouse _____
Self _____
Sex _____

Day 6

Spouse _____
Self _____
Sex _____

Day 7

Spouse _____
Self _____
Sex _____

