

*Red  
Hot*  
MONOGAMY

BILL & PAM FARREL



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

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## RED-HOT MONOGAMY

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# *Sex! What Makes It Red-Hot?*

## HOW TO CREATE SOME STEAMED HEAT!



On a cold, clear January night, the stars flickered in the sky like individual candles calling lovers into one another's arms. Inside, the lights were romantically dim. Music softly serenaded lovers as they reminisced over 25 years of memories.

Anita Renfroe then stepped to the podium in the ballroom and announced, "We are here tonight to celebrate the righteous red-hot monogamy of Bill and Pam Farrel." The crowd laughed as we looked at each other in shocked amusement.

While we were recovering from her statement, our oldest son, Brock, stepped to the podium to say grace at the Twenty-fifth

Anniversary Dinner Gala we were sharing with 300 of our closest friends. He introduced himself by saying, “Hi, everyone. I am Brock Farrel, the first product of my parents’ righteous red-hot monogamy.”

At that moment the concept for this book was conceived. It was embarrassingly awesome to have our love referred to as red-hot monogamy. In our hearts we know this is the dream of every married couple. We were created as sexual beings with an incredible capacity for pleasurable experiences. We were created with an intense desire to be connected to another human. We were also created with incredible emotional potential. As a result, sex can be the greatest source of pleasure on earth or it can be the greatest source of disappointment and insecurity. *Red-Hot Monogamy* is our attempt to help you develop a love life you will love.

## IS IT REALLY THAT RED-HOT?

You may wonder why we chose to write *this* book. What would possess a couple to boldly take on such a personal topic as marital sex? Well, it really chose us. We have been teaching on relationships since we were newlyweds. Our first published book, *Pure Pleasure: Making Your Marriage a Great Affair*, was coauthored with Jim and Sally Conway. It was motivated by the chaos and fallout of the sexual revolution. We wondered how people could be so inundated with sex in the culture, on TV, in magazines, and on the Internet, and yet be so dissatisfied and hurting in their own private sex lives. The main point, we emphasized, was that sex is *not an event*—sex is a relationship. In *Red-Hot Monogamy*, we pick up the conversation and will give you practical, personal tips for creating the kind of sex life that really works.

We have a lot of fun with the topic, but we actually think sex is a serious matter. So many lives can either be destroyed or

enhanced by the way sex is used. It is a lot like atomic energy. Plutonium can be used to produce abundant energy or to enhance medical science. In less scrupulous hands, that same plutonium can be detonated in a bomb that destroys everything in its wake.

Yes, sex is powerful, and, as with everything beautiful that God created, Satan tries to steal, distort, and misuse sex as a weapon against the heart of man. Take music. It has stirred the hearts of every generation of men and women. It can inspire confidence, lower stress, and set incredibly romantic moods. Yet look at musicians such as Curt Cobain and Janis Joplin, who died from misusing drugs in some melodic, tragic lostness.

Or how about medical research that has discovered the cure for polio and made possible things such as limb replacement surgery and organ transplants? These are all great things, yet that same scientific field created the means for the destruction of human life in abortion. Dancing is another example. Dance form, like ballet, is a beautiful art. However, dance can be distorted and misused, as it is in strip clubs around the world. Sex is the same. It is a gift to be valued and protected so it cannot be used as a weapon.

We must make a choice regarding sexual expression. We will either utilize it as a deviant, destructive power or we will harness its potential to keep love alive and vibrant in our marriage relationships.

In a marriage, sex is the spice that rescues our relationships from becoming mundane pursuits of chores. Adult life is filled with responsibilities. We have mortgages to pay, yard work to maintain, laundry to clean, cars to service, and so on. But none of us got married so we could load up on chores. We got married out of hope. We got married because we believed there was some kind of magic between us. We got married because we believed we could have great sex together. A satisfying sex life can add dignity to all the other pursuits of life. It is the thing to look forward

to after a dull or miserable day at work. Sex is the moment of connection that creates a deep bond, even when sprinkled weeks or months apart. Sexual union adds an underlying deposit of strength that can help hold couples together when life threatens to pull them apart.

Though sex is undeniably an important aspect of a healthy marriage, it is challenging to keep sex in its proper place. Ask any married couple. If they are honest, they will share that the act of marital sex is at the same time a great source of delight, an agonizing source of frustration, an intimate place of togetherness, and an awkward place of embarrassment or trauma. The topic of sex, by its very nature, elicits an emotional response. You will rarely get a ho-hum response when you ask someone about their sex life. Sexual intimacy, by its very nature, was designed by the Creator as a gift for the soul. At times people will try to tell us that sex is not a big deal, but that is usually an attempt to hide their frustration over not developing the intimacy they had hoped for.

It still amazes me (Bill) that, after 25 years of being together, sex still has such an effect on Pam and me. When we are in sync with each other and enjoying each other often, life is good. The sky is bluer, the sun is brighter, and all tasks seem easier. I know I am easily distracted by Pam when we are in tune with each other, but I accomplish more in the other areas of my life. I think more clearly and have more emotional energy to invest in my goals. My life stops when I get a peek at her breasts. I freeze in my tracks when she winks at me and gives me that “Do you wanna?” look. It takes time out of my schedule, but I still get more done. I will never understand that.

It also amazes me how ridiculous I can be when we are not as sexually active as I would like. I become sad, frustrated, and even angry. I snap at dumb things in life and become unproductive. Everything seems harder and less interesting. I find myself

thinking weird thoughts, such as: *I thought she cared about me. She used to think I was attractive. Why is everything else in life more important than me?* To be sure, these are overreactions, but I don't seem to have any defenses against thinking this way, except, of course, reengaging sexually with Pam.

Because we recognize the powerful impact of good marital sex, our goal is to fan the flame of your love. God gave you this gift to be enjoyed, savored, and strengthened. When you enhance your overall marital well-being, the rest of your life is more effective in accomplishing God's purpose for you.

## DO NOT DISTURB

We have a vivid example of our kids knowing that our love life is alive and well. Our oldest son, Brock, was dating Hannah, who is now his wife. All four of us parents are involved with Christian publishing. Hannah's folks own a Christian bookstore, and we write some of the books that go in it. So when Hannah and Brock's relationship started to get serious, we decided to converge in Atlanta for the Christian booksellers convention. We asked the kids to come down from Liberty University, where they were attending summer school, and meet us in Atlanta. On our first day there, Bill went to a business meeting while I got ready for an evening appointment. To avoid an embarrassing intrusion during my shower, I hung the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door. Brock was with Hannah's family and planning to meet us for dinner. While he was walking to our hotel, a sudden thunderstorm hit that completely drenched him. Brock's soggy clothes were dripping on the carpet as he entered the hotel. He was desperate to get into our room and change, but when he arrived at the door he noticed the "Do Not Disturb" sign barricading his entrance. From the hallway outside our room, I heard a loud exclamation,

“Oh, man, I can’t believe this! Do not disturb! I know what that means. Why now? It’s the middle of the afternoon!”

I laughed as I opened the door. Brock seemed very relieved that it was only me, and that I was fully clothed.

“Whew! Thanks, Mom. I saw the sign and I thought, ‘I can’t interrupt Mom and Dad having sex!’ That is just TMI!” (Too much information.)

“It’s okay, honey. Dad isn’t even here. But it’s amazing and awesome that the first thought in your 20-year-old mind is that you’d be interrupting our love life!”

“Yeah, it’s weird. I don’t really like to think about you and Dad that way, but I know I want a marriage just like yours when I’ve been married 25 years too.”

## RED HOTS

In junior high, my (Pam’s) favorite candies were red hots or Hot Tamales. That zesty cinnamon flavor really made me feel alive. I think that is why so many euphemisms for sex are related to “red,” “hot,” or “fire.” Think about it. “Come on, baby, light my fire,” “Hunka hunka burnin’ love,” Jerry Lee Lewis’ “Great Balls of Fire,” or the pounding back beat of the ’70s dance hit, “Fire!”

We whisper things in the throes of passion, such as “You set my heart ablaze” or “I am consumed by your love.” We use word pictures that describe sex as being much like a forest fire consuming whatever is in its path. We long to be in a love relationship that feels as powerful as a raging fire. During the San Diego fires, the blaze was so strong that in one section it jumped a ten-lane freeway. Don’t we all long to be loved so intensely that nothing can stop or quench our lover’s burning passion?

Why do we long for intense, all-consuming love? Because God designed us to give and receive love that way. Our physical form and our desire to make ready use of it are no surprise to God. We

are hardwired for passion. Once Bill and I were meeting with a well-known psychologist. He had a stack of research on his desk about the functioning of the central nervous system. He shared his fascination with us at his new discovery. He explained that the neurological path we use when we sing praise to God or pray is the same path traveled when we engage in sexual intimacy. It certainly seems a person who is passionate about God has a head start on passion in a marriage because the path is well used from head to heart.

Other studies back this up. Couples that attend church rate their sex life with the highest possible rating. Couples that pray together daily also give their sex life five stars. (There's new motivation to pray!) Couples that are in a small group or a friendship circle that believes in long-term love tend to have long-term, sexually satisfying relationships. And couples that are in long-term, married, monogamous relationships rate their overall sexual satisfaction much higher than their single counterparts. So, a statistically accurate portrayal of sex in the city would tell the stories of the love lives of the pastor and his wife or of other couples sitting in the pews each Sunday. That's where the sizzling sex really is—in the marriages of those who are passionately committed to God and each other. Those are some headlines you don't see everyday.

## MONOGAMOUS HEADLINES

Think about it. What if some of our commercials and slogans were rewritten to more accurately describe how to find sex that sizzles?

*Got Sex? No? Then go to Sunday school.*

*Non-Desperate Housewives.* This week's episode depicts the happily married, sexually satisfied lives of three female Bible study facilitators and their faithful husbands.

97110, (not 90210, the zip code of Hollywood, but rather the zip code of Cannon Beach Conference Center, a place that offers outstanding Christian couples' conferences on the romantic Oregon Coast).

And nix Howard Stern. If a TV show really wanted to capture true, fulfilling, romantic love portraying red-hot monogamy, they should send the cameras to some of the United Marriage Encounter or Lifeway's Celebrate Marriage weekends. Those are the places in which couples who are sweetly, amazingly, and passionately in love with each other show up.

So move over, Hugh Hefner, with your counterfeit sexual exploits. The real deal is found behind closed doors in the lives of our seminary students, everyday believers, professors, pastors, and missionaries. (It is interesting that the most common sexual position is called "missionary" position.) Passion, the intense sexuality that is pure, fulfilling, and powerful, would be more likely found in the bedroom of a couple who said "I do" at the altar, not a couple living together or experiencing a one-night stand. What the media portrays and what is reality are two very different things. The truth is that 90 percent of couples living together describe their relationship as "on the rocks." And couples who cohabitate, if they ever do make it to the altar, are twice as likely to divorce as couples who did not live together.<sup>1</sup>

We don't point this out to make you feel shame or guilt if you made that cohabitation choice. Instead, we want to let you in on the truth that people who are married have the hottest sex lives. So we've now let the cat out of the bag: Studies all indicate the best sex happens in a long-term, monogamous, committed marriage relationship. The best sex is not found in Las Vegas or on some porn screen. No, the best of what sex is, the most wonderful examples of true fulfilling and passionate sexuality, is found inside the private bedroom walls of committed married couples.

The media is filled with all kinds of pictures of sexuality, but they are lies and misrepresentations of the real thing. Move over, Victoria! Sizzling sex was God's secret long before you got ahold of it! Do you think the world needs more real-life examples of righteous red-hot monogamy? Want to join the club of couples who have a long-term, happy marriage with a deeply satisfying and fulfilling sex life? Then you've come to the right place.

The world needs to see more couples who have strong marriages. One component to strong, influential love is a satisfying sex life. People will be able to tell that you two have red-hot monogamy. You won't have to say a word! They will see it in the sparkle of your eyes, in the smile on your face, and in the skip in your step. People will catch on that you and your mate are madly in love from the way you hold hands or touch as you pass one another in the hallway. When sparks are flying, no one has to say a word. Everyone can tell when someone is in love.

## INFLUENTIAL LOVE

Wouldn't you love to be the poster couple for the real thing? You are reading this book because you long for all the wonderful benefits that accompany a fulfilling sex life. Read on, and you will gain the skills and principles to have a lifetime of red-hot monogamy. You will become the role model for all that is right and good in love and marriage.

Bill and I have role models too. At one of our conferences we met a couple who were both in their eighties. During the break the wife came up and whispered a question. "Pam, you've been talking about having a God-filled life that leads to passion. Is there a Guinness world record for how many times a couple over 80 has had sex in one year? Because I think my husband and I have broken it."

I answered, “I don’t know if there is a record, but I do know I want to be you when I grow up!”

## CAUTION: RED-HOT MONOGAMY

We are aware that people have different comfort levels with discussions about sexuality. Some of us are children of the ’60s and ’70s and are quite open about sex. One thing the free love movement accomplished was moving the discussion of sex to the public arena. You may have been one of those militants who painted a flower on your cheek and donned a peasant blouse and skirt and marched with a sign that read “Make love, not war.” You feel you have been freed up from oppressive Victorian views of sexuality and are uninhibited in expressing your views. (We do think that the ’60s gave people freedom in this area of discussing sex, but that same freedom, in the general population, wasn’t handled very well. The so called “free love” ended up costing us a lot more than we ever bargained for.) Nonetheless, some of us have sat in classes on human sexuality or at least read a book or two on the topic. We may have even pulled the *Kama Sutra* off the shelf in a bookstore when we thought no one would be looking.

However, others prefer to keep the lights off and their mouths shut when it comes to the area of sexuality. The children of these couples may wonder how they ever got here because Mom and Dad never talk about sex. A few of us try our best, on occasion, to talk to our kids about the birds and bees, but euphemisms and word pictures can sometimes lead to miscommunication and confusion.

Like the three-year-old who went with his dad to see a litter of kittens. On returning home, he breathlessly informed his mother that there were two boy kittens and two girl kittens. “How did

you know?” his mom asked. “Daddy picked them up and looked underneath,” he replied. “I think it’s printed on the bottom.”

## THE CREATOR’S HEART

We will try our best to balance God’s holy reverence of the gift of sex with God’s cosmic sense of humor about the topic. Really, think about it. Think about the plumbing and the actual act of sex. God came up with the whole system. One that requires great energy and unique positioning and usually happens when we are completely naked. He could have made it so that we propagated the species by cutting off a finger and placing it in a jar of water like a rhododendron plant. But God didn’t do that. We think He may have smiled and winked when He created sex. We will seek to discuss the very serious, and the amazingly personal, topic of sex with respect for the gift. However, to make the journey a bit less like seventh-grade health class and more like a romantic honeymoon night, we will add in a dash of humor, and we pray, a whole lot of practical ideas to fan the flame of your love life.

If for any reason you are offended by something we say, just take a felt-tip marker and cross it out. This is your book. This is your love life. This is a private journey to the heart of your spouse (with a few stops at places like the erogenous zone and G-spot). Personalize the principles. Morph the map. Edit the instructions. Your sex life is like clay. In creating a super sex life, there are three sets of hands molding the art: yours, your mate’s, and the Creator’s. Think of us as simply the potter’s wheel. We’ll keep the topic spinning while you and your spouse and God create a masterpiece of love.

But please don’t blame us if our discussion is candid and honest. We take our example from God. He wrote an entire book dedicated to marital love and sexuality—the Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon, as it is often entitled). We will be referring back

to the couple God uses in this book of the Bible as our couple of reference. We figured, because they are dead, they won't mind us talking about their private lives. And since God first published their story, the Song of Songs seems a safe place to stimulate our discussion.

## KEN AND BARBIE

When I (Pam) was a little girl, my sister and I played with Barbies for hours under the shade of the lilac bush or in our downstairs bedroom. We had lots of girl Barbies, but even back then good men were in short supply. We'd borrow our brother's Johnny West, Cartwright action figures, and G.I. Joes. We usually argued over who got to date "Little Joe." What we asked for Christmas every year, and never received, was a Ken doll. If we could just get our hands on this hunk of a man, we'd have someone appropriate for Barbie to date. Ken sure seemed like Mr. Right.

Unlike our unfortunate Barbies, the young bride in Song of Songs did hook Mr. Right, or shall I say, Mr. More than Right! Her Mr. Right was the king of all Israel! And the sweet, humble Shulamite woman was in awe that God brought their lives together. There are few things better in life than feeling this way about your husband or wife. We all want to believe our spouses are miraculous gifts of God, but marrying the right person does not happen by accident.

We'll be checking in on this couple from time to time, noting the strengths and weaknesses of their intimate life. This was Solomon's first love, and he made wise, right choices in this relationship. Later on, he must have experienced a midlife crisis because he began to make unwise decisions. He is a great example of our modern world. He started well, as well as anyone has ever started. He was enamored with his wife, and they were

in sync socially, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. But then he got distracted. He started believing there was something better than a committed, monogamous relationship. He gave his heart away to other women and other pursuits. It wasn't long before his energy was spent and he could no longer live by the wisdom he had dispensed to so many others. (That's what happens when you break God's rules of love. Sex is like a loaded pistol. It can shoot down the enemies of love, such as lack of time, fear, and loneliness, but too often sex is misused and then it's like shooting yourself in the foot—it hurts.)

Let's give this biblical couple some more modern nicknames, and shall we also set aside all the royal titles? (We don't know about you, but none of our best friends are His Royal Highness or Duchess or Duke of anything.) So we'll simply call King Solomon, Sol, and for the Shulamite woman, let's call her Sunny. Sol and Sunny will become our case study couple.

## THE BIG PICTURE

Recently, our van quit in the middle of the road. I (Pam) had to call AAA to come rescue me. While I was waiting, I pulled out our trusty owner's manual so I would have a clue of what might be going on with my vehicle. I have found this manual to be an informative book detailing how the car is *supposed* to run.

In the same way, when we first got our computer years ago, I had Bill buy me *PC for Dummies* or some other book with a similar title because someone had to know more about this box sitting on this desk than I did. Although things felt awkward at first and I had to consult the manual often, after a while I got the hang of using my computer. The principles of the book have become quite normal and natural for me now. We all depend on manuals for information for various things. Or we can go to a search engine on the Internet and find helpful information

regarding almost any fix we find ourselves in. Well, the Song of Songs is a kind of manual on how to fan the flame of love. Sol and Sunny will be the characters in the human drama of life to show us what things are turn ons and what are turn offs in this journey to sexual fulfillment.

## WHY HAVE SEX?

Okay, we know some of you are laughing and saying, “You’ve got to be kidding! Why did they ask that question? The answer is obvious—it feels great!” Well, yes, we are aware of that. And we hope you are one of the fortunate couples who is experiencing great sex. This book will be packed with ideas on how to enhance your sex life and perhaps increase the frequency so you can experience that ecstasy more often. However, for a moment, push “pause” on the pleasure button while we look at all the reasons why God invented this thing called sex.

*Procreation.* This one is a bit obvious. Sex creates babies. For the human race to go forward, sex has to take place. Social studies show it is preferable for the children if they are born into a loving family with both a mom and a dad united in marriage.

*Proclamation.* When a couple marries, their act of consummation is a symbolic picture of the wedding of Christ and His church. In a real sense, each time a couple enjoys each other sexually, it is a proclamation to Satan that God’s plan of love will win out over Satan’s misguided attempt to dethrone the Lord in the Garden of Eden. A happily married couple, one united emotionally, spiritually, and sexually, is one of the best antidotes to the evil in the world because love is proclaimed.

*Reconnection.* Life is busy, and that is no surprise to God, so He planned a yearning to be together into the human soul. The deep intellectual, emotional, and spiritual connection that happens during sex is progressive. Good sex makes us yearn for more

good sex, so a wonderful cycle of marital union can develop that will keep a couple coming back together over and over again.

*Recreation.* God actually thinks sex should be fun. In the Old Testament, when a king spotted Isaac and Rebekah caressing in a private moment, the word he used to describe their activity is “sporting with” (Genesis 26:8). That sounds a whole lot like fun to us. In addition, if you do a quick read through the Song of Songs, you see that the king and his newlywed wife are enjoying their relationship immensely. They even have code words for sex and sexual acts. They play games to build their anticipation of being together, and later in the book, we’ll see just how much this couple enjoyed their sexual relationship. Song of Songs is all about a couple who enjoys a healthy sexual life, and God included it in the canon of Holy Scripture to remind us that that sex is supposed to be enjoyable.

*Rejuvenation.* Sex within the context of marriage is good for your emotional and physical well-being. Sex raises your endorphin level, so it makes you happier. Sex even burns calories.

According to the calorie counter on the Health Status website, an hour of sex burns 250 calories, the same amount as an hour of walking. To better put this number in perspective, sixty minutes of sleeping burns 55 calories, and an hour of running burns 800. Assuming that one did not make any alterations in his or her diet, by engaging in an hour of sex every day, one would lose a pound every two weeks.<sup>2</sup>

Kissing burns calories, too. Professor Bryant Stamford, PhD of the University of Louisville, postulates that a deep, passionate kiss may double your basic metabolic rate and burn as many as two calories a minute. Do the math. Kissing for 15 minutes burns approximately 30 calories. If one were to kiss passionately for

15 minutes, that might lead to other calorie burning activities...<sup>3</sup>

Of course, sex does not qualify as the cornerstone of your aerobic workout program, but it is a great addition. We like what Janet Lee of Gymamerica.com has to say about how many calories are burned during sex:

Let's put it this way: If you're planning to make sex a part of an already active lifestyle, great. But if you're relying on it to lose weight or tone up, you'd need to spend hours a day in the sack. According to the energy expenditure tables compiled by exercise physiologists and found in the *Health and Fitness Instructors Handbook* (Human Kinetics, 1997), sex burns anywhere from 60 to 120 (the lower range for foreplay and the upper range for particularly vigorous sex) calories an hour for a 130-lb. woman and 77 to 155 calories an hour for a 170-lb. man. Considering that running burns around 600 calories an hour, you can see that sex is not the most efficient mode of weight loss. In fact, foreplay takes about the same amount of energy as sitting around on the couch, and a more rousing session that might wake up the neighbors is still only the equivalent of a slow walk. But really, who's counting?<sup>4</sup>

## PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

For some of you, the subtitle *Making Your Marriage Sizzle* has you salivating in anticipation. You are excited that you will have a little more sex over the next few weeks. You can't wait to put this book down and whisk your spouse into the bedroom for your "hands-on homework" lessons.

For others of you, the subtitle strikes terror in your soul. Sex to you has not been “all that.” Perhaps you have been the victim of sex used out of context (rape, molestation, or even rushed premarital sex in the back of a pickup). These memories leave you cold, disinterested, afraid, or numb to the whole idea of sex—even sex with your marriage partner. We will attempt to move everyone forward, no matter where you are on this continuum. For some of you, this book will be the key to unlock the hurt and put you on the road to healing by connecting you with resources for future growth and help in this vital area. For you, we pray our words and resources will be like going to the dentist. It isn’t much fun when you look at the appointment on the calendar, but the guy can make your smile brighter and your self-confidence grow if you give him a chance. We are not saying this to make light of some really hard, extremely painful situation you have experienced. Rather, we are holding out God’s power to give you the hope and help you need to reclaim the gift He designed for *you*, a gift He created to bless *you*, to encourage *you*, to fulfill *you*. Contrary to what you may have felt or experienced in the past, God had *you* in mind when He designed the gift of sex. Satan tried to steal the gift from you; God wants to give you the gift of enjoyable sex back again. Because of this, we have prayed that every person who has any emotional pain at all connected to sex will discover a healing balm of hope and the path to wellness within the pages of this book.

Others of you love the gift and, like on Christmas morning, you can’t wait to unwrap it. You have experienced just enough fulfillment and just enough satisfaction that you are wanting more of the same great feeling you have known in precious moments of connection. You have experienced the deep enrichment that happens on every level: emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and you long for more of those experiences with the one whom your “soul loves” (Song of Songs 3:4 NASB).

You have desires to be like a passionate painter, and you want to sketch a masterpiece of love with your mate. You are like a master chef who longs to please the palate of his patrons, in this case your spouse. You want to be the well-trained Olympic athlete who excels to gain the victory, and in this scenario, the victory is a lifelong pursuit of passion that is both enriching and fulfilling. You are a conductor, and you long to create a symphony of love. But just like the painter, the chef, the athlete, and the conductor, perfection doesn't happen in just a few weeks. However, like all those who are experts in their fields of endeavor, you start someplace. This is that someplace. It is *Red-Hot Monogamy 101: An Introduction to the Principles and Practices of Fanning the Flame of Love*.

All we ask is that you, as a couple, set aside the next few weeks to learn (and—praise God—practice!) what is on the pages of this book. Still, some of you might be asking, “What if I am the only one in the marriage who wants to work on our love life?” We can work with that. Anyone who learns to love better, anyone who makes their mate a priority is bound to see some improvement in the overall status of his or her marriage. After all, what spouse can resist being loved unconditionally and with enthusiasm?



## Hands-on Homework

At the end of every chapter we will offer some “practice drills” (more people would go to college if classes offered these kind of homework assignments). So let’s start with our first “hands-on assignment.” Select one of the two options below and begin fanning the flame of your love life today:

1. Right now, with your marriage partner, weave your fingers together and pray a simple prayer entrusting your love life to God. Even a short sentence that invites Him to be a part of the adventure ahead will be fine. So perhaps something such as: *God, thank You for my spouse. What a gift he or she is to my life. Please fan the flame of our love as we read this book together. Meet us and give us the good gifts You have planned and promised to us. Amen.*
2. If you are reading this as a solo venture, then right now, or as you go to bed tonight, go to your spouse or snuggle up next to him or her, and place your arms around him or her and simply pray. (Praying aloud is best, but silently will also do): *God, thank You for the gift of (your spouse’s name). I am so thankful You brought him or her into my life as a gift. Place Your good hand of love on our life, Lord. Amen.*



*Red-Hot*  
ROMANCE IDEAS

1. Send a gift in the mail that draws your spouse's heart home to you. You probably won't even have to enclose a note if you send her a nightie, some provocative panties, or something sexy for him to wear.
2. If you hear "your song" on the radio, simply call his or her cell phone and hold your phone up to the speaker and let the song do the romancing.
3. Send a handmade card. Most computers now have programs to personalize a message. One Valentine's Day, Bill inserted pictures of the front covers of all of our books onto separate greeting cards. He then created a twist of words that celebrated our love. For example, "It's been a Pure Pleasure being married to you." And, "If Men Are Like Waffles and Women Are Like Spaghetti, my pantry is filled with your love."
4. Send a unique gift box in the mail: a treasure chest with an invitation to "unlock my passion," a love note buried under a layer of dried rose petals, a scroll on antique-looking paper inviting your mate out for a fancy night on the town. (For a big bang, insert the rolled-up scroll through a beautiful, brand-new ring in your lover's size.)
5. Picture this!
  - Send a photo e-mail invitation (this picture should only contain what you'd be willing to have go out on the Internet worldwide, just to be on the safe side).

- Create a photo postcard of the two of you and on the back, write a thank-you for a special memory and an invitation out to another romantic activity.
  - Make a photo slide show with many pictures of the two of you. Set it to your favorite song and e-mail the show to your loved one.
  - Have a “glamour shot” taken and slip the picture on his or her desk with a provocative note or card on the back.
  - Create a photo collage for his or her office.
6. Leave a heart made of Play-Doh or clay on his or her desk or nightstand and insert a card with an invitation for some red-hot monogamy that night sticking out of the heart.
  7. Write your invitations for sex in the steam on the bathroom mirror as your lover takes his or her shower.
  8. Sit facing each other as if you are looking in the mirror, touching fingertips, and then one of you takes the lead. While you maintain physical contact, your partner moves in unison with you.
  9. Re-create your first date. If you can still fit into them, wear the same clothes. If not, at least go to the same places.
  10. Go back to the place you first said “I love you” and say “I love you” again.
  11. Go on a date to the place you got engaged and share memories of the happiest days you have experienced since then.
  12. Go back to the location you honeymooned and have a second honeymoon.

13. Read a piece of classical romantic literature together: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Jane Eyre*, *Romeo and Juliet*.
14. Check out a book from the library or buy a book of love poems. Sit in front of the fireplace in each other's arms and take turns reading poems to each other.
15. Write a love song. Even if you can't sing it, you can read the lyrics.
16. Write your own love poem. Even a simple "Roses are red..." rendition will make him or her smile.
17. Rewrite a love song that is popular and personalize the lyrics to your relationship. (A "Weird Al" Yankovic or Anita Renfroe parody that makes your lover laugh is a unique twist to this idea.) You can also reword the tune to send a more serious invitation or message.
18. Is there a line from a song that you can hum into your lover's ear as he or she falls to sleep at night that will fan the flame of love? This can also work to encourage your spouse in a tense public setting or when he or she is under stress. It can remind your lover that there is more to life than work and that red-hot monogamy can make things feel better.
19. Buy a box of chocolate. Take a few of the chocolates out, and in the paper cups place a few other trinkets and gifts: jewelry, a key, a tiny love note, tickets to a play or movie, a flower, etc.
20. Create a romance almanac. Create lists of: Places We Have Loved to Go, Restaurants We Love to Eat At, Sexual Positions We Have Tried, Positions Yet to Try, 10 Best Things About You, 20 Romantic Movies Still to See, 10 Books on Marriage Still to Read, Dream-Date List, Places We Want to Vacation, Concert Schedules, Drama Options, etc.

21. Take a calendar (you can often pick up a free one at Hallmark stores) and write in important dates (anniversaries, birthdays, possible date ideas). Or write in something you love about your spouse each Monday, someplace you want to meet him or her each Tuesday, etc. Write in unique anniversaries: the anniversary of the day of your first date, the first “I love you,” the first kiss, the day you met, etc. Give the calendar to your spouse not as a list of expectations, but as a list of invitations. Let him or her respond to each invitation.
22. Make a romantic Rolodex. Give him or her the info to succeed with you romantically. Make Rolodex cards for florists, clothing stores, restaurants, hobby stores, Internet sites you have bookmarked, etc.
23. Create a series of thank-you notes. Send one a day for as many days as you can think of something to thank your mate for. Some things to be thankful for are: his or her character, things he or she has done for you, his or her commitment to you. One line on a card day after day will make a big impact.
24. Make his or her favorite meal. Add a white linen tablecloth, candlelight, flowers, and music. You might even wear a provocative waiter or waitress outfit—then ask for your tip with a wink and a smile.
25. Have an old-fashioned evening. Send a formal invitation, come to the door with flowers and chocolates, open doors for her, and perhaps find a malt shop or some other nostalgic place to go on the date. Find a Lover’s Lane where you can park, “look at the moon,” and steam up the car windows a bit. Give her a kiss under the light at the door at the end of the evening.