

Dear Justin,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You said you were afraid that your wife was going to cheat on you. You also said that she is living a “party lifestyle” and expressed a desire to divorce you. You mentioned that she even said that she “hates” you. Nonetheless, she wants “to have sex (with you) strictly out of lust, not love.” You wanted to know if you were “required” to have marital relations with her because “[your] body is not your own.”

The first question we need to ask you is, “Is your wife a Christian?” If she is not, her values may be worldly, thus very different from yours.

As Christians we believe in the sanctity of marriage. In fact, the Bible presents marriage as a divine institution. God himself united Adam and Eve in holy matrimony, saying, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). “Cleaving” suggests the idea of being permanently glued or joined together. In the sight of God it means wholehearted commitment, exclusivity, and unswerving loyalty to one’s marital partner. On a deeper, spiritual level, a Christian marriage is an earthly picture symbolizing the heavenly union of Christ and his Church. “After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.” (Ephesians 5:29) Therefore, it is the obligation of both parties to prayerfully ask the Lord for guidance to help them find a way to repair their union when dissolution and discord veer their ugly heads. Along with prayer, commitment is the ultimate determining factor in the success or failure of any marriage. Feelings may change over time, but as long as the couple is committed to the marriage covenant, each will find unselfish reasons to love and cherish the other, even when disappointment, imperfections and lost expectations prevail.

Assuming that your wife is a Christian, we would suggest Christian marriage counseling for both of you. Perhaps, with counseling and prayer the underlying issues will be brought to the fore and, over time, the marriage can be repaired, if your wife willingly desires that outcome. A marriage must be nurtured. It requires time and work but it is well worth the effort. The Apostle Paul gives much good advice to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:22-33. He ends by saying, “Each of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” (Ephesians 5:33)

The Bible states that the act of fornication on the part of one or both Christian partners is the only legitimate ground for divorce. (See also Matthew 5:27-32.) These scriptures are very clear that the only acceptable reason for divorce between two Christians is marital unfaithfulness (adultery). However, if your wife is not a believer (a Christian) and is intent on leaving the marriage, you may let her go even if adultery has not been committed. Scriptural guidance for such an occurrence is found in 1 Corinthians 7:10-15. “But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.” (1 Corinthians 7:15)

Divorce is NEVER pleasing to God. It breaks the most sacred earthly covenant made between two people and should only be broken in the most dire of scripturally based circumstances. Not being happy is not a reason to divorce. Not being fulfilled is not a reason to divorce. Not feeling equally yoked is not a reason to divorce. We must approach divorce with the highest spiritual insight possible and only see it through when there has been fornication OR, in the case of an unbeliever, there is NO possibility of reconciliation.

We hope we have answered your question. When each partner concentrates on the positive aspects of the other, intimacy issues should begin to improve. In order to assist you in this process, however, you may need to seek counseling from a therapist who understands and respects Christian morals and values.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio