

Sex within marriage — held warmly, said well

A one-page summary for couples, sisters, and faith leaders

The picture we hold

Marriage in our scriptures is leave-and-leave: two becoming one. Bodies treated as extensions of one's own — cherished, fed, kept warm. The Song of Songs is not shy. Pleasure between spouses is praised, not policed. This is the starting picture.

When a single verse is used as a leash

If a verse is taken alone — pulled out of the wider call to mutual love — and used to demand sex, silence, or submission, that is misuse. A safer reading places it back inside the whole: tenderness first, then the verse makes sense.

Planned abstinence & celibacy seasons

Both traditions allow planned seasons apart — for prayer, for healing, for postpartum recovery. Agreed together. Time-bound. Not weaponised.

Reunion — emotionally first

Coming back together is emotional before it is physical. A meal. A long conversation. An apology if one is owed. The body follows the heart, not the other way round.

Quick couple scripts

Opening a celibacy season

'I'd like us to take a season for prayer and rest. Two weeks. Then we talk again.'

Holding boundaries

'I love you. Tonight is a no. That doesn't mean tomorrow is a no.'

Reunion night

'Let's eat first. Talk first. The rest will come when we're both ready.'

If a verse is used against you

'Read me the whole chapter. Not one line. The whole chapter.'

Voices already doing this work

- Dr Sadaf Lodhi — Muslim OB-GYN, sexual health
- Dr Shaakira Abdullah — The Halal Sexpert
- Amirah Zaky — Muslim sex educator
- Habeeb Akande — Islamic intimacy author
- Seema Anand — South Asian erotic storytelling
- Public Orthodoxy (Fordham) — Christian dialogue
- Dr Christopher West — Theology of the Body
- Dr Tina Schermer Sellers — sex-positive faith therapy
- Dr Laura Anderson — religious trauma recovery

Belonging

Mutual tenderness. Two bodies treated as one — not one body owning another.

Consent

A 'yes' that could have been a 'no'. Pressure, debt-language, or scripture-as-leash is not consent.

Context

Read the whole passage, not a single line. Leave-and-leave, Solomon's love, mutual care.