



"Jesus said, 'Go call your husband.' The woman answered... 'I do not have a husband.' Jesus answered, 'You are right... For you have had five husbands, and the one you are with now is not your husband'" (John 4:16-19)

Shadow-Dancing in the Cave The Spirituality of Marriage

Dancing in the Cave

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing

Dancing requires choreography

Dancing requires attention to details, noticing the smallest movements by the other person, not stepping on toes

Dancing requires precise timing

Dancing requires lots of practice; sacrificing other things we want to do

Married life is "dancing with your spouse"

In learning to communicate

In managing finances

In raising children

In dealing with extended family

In sexual intimacy

Have you learned to dance with your spouse? Or still stepping on toes?

John 4 is a dance between Jesus and woman

Jesus asks her about her husband, she dodges the question

Ultimately, Jesus shows her that the "one she is with" (meaning Jesus) is not her husband (yet)

Spirituality of marriage is learning to dance with our spouse, ultimately leading us to the One whom we really desire:
Jesus

Dancing is also fun, joyful!

"This does not mean we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously – no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner – no mere tolerance, or indulgence which parodies love as

flippancy parodies merriment" ("The Weight of Glory," in
The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses, 19)

The pope reflects on Song of Songs and Tobit, becomes our
"dance instructor" and teaches us "TOB two-step"

Song of Songs

"You have ravished my heart, **my sister, my bride**; you have
ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one bead of
your necklace. How sweet are your caresses, **my sister, my
bride**" (Song, 4:9-10)

The term "sister" is used **before** the term "bride,"
suggesting "importance"

Think of how differently a man relates to his sister: he
desires to protect her, he seeks her happiness
because he won't let her date a bum

Seeing his spouse as "sister" allows the husband to
approach the bride with a certain "disinterest"

"Disinterest" is not "lack of interest"

The husband is very interested in **her** well-being, not
his selfish pleasure

"Wojtyla wrote that if a husband is truly to love his wife, 'it
is necessary to insist that intercourse must not serve
merely as a means of allowing [his] climax....The man
must take [the] difference between male and female
reactions into account...so that climax may be reached
[by] both...and as far as possible occur in both
simultaneously.' The husband must do this 'not for
hedonistic, but for altruistic reasons.' In this case, if 'we
take into account the shorter and more violent curve of
arousal in the man, [such] tenderness on his part in the
context of marital intercourse acquires the significance of
an act of virtue' (LR, pp. 272, 275)" (*Theology of the Body
for Beginners*, 82)

Seen by husband in this way wife feels deep peace,
security, respect

She feels he loves her as a person, not just an object
for pleasure

Women feel close to priests: we look at them as
"sister"

Christopher West observes, the reason women
complain of having a headache when the husband
wants to have sex is that she feels her husband does
not see her as "sister"

In heaven we are "brother," "sister" for each other,
not "husband," "wife"

At a funeral liturgy the deceased is referred to as
"sister" or "brother"

Seeing your spouse as "brother" or "sister" develops a
spirituality of marriage; you're beginning to dance

"A **garden enclosed** you are, my sister, bride, a garden enclosed, a **fountain sealed** (Song 4:12)

The bride is "master of her own mystery," the husband must discover "the inner inviolability of the person"

You cannot force your love on another person; ever tried to kiss someone who didn't want to kiss you back?

Rape is the total violation of the inviolability of another person; you enter unwelcome and barge into another's sacred sanctuary

Painting of Jesus standing at a door knocking, but the door doesn't have a knob; Jesus doesn't force Himself into our hearts: "patient waiting" should mark spousal spirituality

Do not "trick" the other person

"But the saying that 'men will use love in order to get sex and women will use sex in order to get love' rings true at some level" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 32)

"I just tell my husband 'not this week,' and he respects me": spouses enjoys "veto power" regarding sexual intimacy

When the love of husband is offered as a free gift – "disinterested" – the bride responds with gift of herself

"In the moment in which the bride of the Song of Songs, the bride-sister, herself the master of the intimate mystery of her own femininity, asks, 'set me as a seal on your heart,' the whole delicate structure of spousal love closes, so to speak, in its own inner interpersonal circle" (*Man and Woman He Created Them*, 580)

Song of Songs teaches spouses to see each other first as brother or sister, and to respect that the other is "a garden enclosed" a "fountain sealed," this is marital dancing

Reflections on Tobit and the prayer of spouses

Advice of St. Raphael to Tobias: pray for grace to be victorious (Tobit 6:18)

Tobias and Sarah pray before consummating their marriage on their honeymoon night (Tobit 8:5-8)

Tobias and Sarah see consummation as part of "epiclesis" of marriage

"One can say in this prayer the dimension of the liturgy proper to the sacrament is outlined against the horizon of the 'language of the body' (*Man and Woman*, 598)

Pray before engaging in sex, so you see your spouse as "sister," as "garden enclosed"

Advice to dating couples

Say "Grace Before Meals" prior to consummating your love

"**Bless us, O Lord**" – may this moment of intimacy be a blessing and not a curse – "**and these Thy gifts**" – sexuality is God's gift: I must respect and revere it; this is hallowed ground – "**which we are about to receive from Thy bounty**" – this moment is but a foretaste of the eternal consummation of the heavenly marriage – "**through Christ our Lord** – this is *from* Christ because it helps me to be more *like* Christ, making a gift of myself to my spouse – **Amen.**"

Tobias and Sarah face "test of life and death"

Tobias was potential victim on his wedding night; he faced death like previous spouses (Tobit 7:11)

Every man faces a "test of life and death" in confronting the use of his sexual powers, literally and spiritually

"And so when they unite as husband and wife, they must find themselves in the situation in which the powers of good and evil fight against each other and measure each other" (*TOB*, 27 June 1984)

Sexuality connected to life and death

"Think how intertwined sex is with the very reality of human existence. You simply would not exist without the sexual union of your parents – and their parents before them, and their parents before them...Every human being is the end result of thousands upon thousands of indispensable sexual unions. Remove just one sexual union from your family tree and you wouldn't exist...When we tinker with God's plan for sex, we're tinkering with the cosmic stream of human existence. The human race – it's existence, it's balance – is literally determined by who is having sex with whom, and, in what manner" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 13-14)

Tobias and Sarah's prayer opens their hearts to God's power, making them victorious in test of life and death

"The prayer of Tobias and Sarah becomes in some way the deepest model of the liturgy, whose word is a word of power...It is the power that frees from evil and purifies" (*Man and Woman*, 604)

This "power" is "epiclesis," Holy Spirit

"Sexual union within marriage, then, is an oath-in-action, a liturgical event. Thus, it is also a sign of something divine" (*Swear to God*, 158)

Sex celebrates the sacrament of marriage, spouses receive a new dose of God's healing and purifying grace

When spouses do this respecting God's plan for sex,
they help bring each other one step closer to
heaven; if they abuse this gift they help bring their
spouse one step closer to...

"TOB two-step" helps us get our spouses "two steps" closer to
heaven, to Jesus

Modern dance steps in the cave

"The man has to lead, or you trip" (Janice Hill): male has
different role than female in a dance

Disservice of women's equality movement: erase differences
between men and woman: equality = sameness

Two books reversing that trend: appreciate differences
between men and woman; when spouses love each other
more, they love Jesus more

Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus (1992) by John
Gray on communication

"Men and women differ in all areas of their lives. Not only
do men and women communicate differently but they
think, feel, perceive, react, respond, love, need, and
appreciate differently. They almost seem to be from
different planets, speaking different languages and
needing different nourishment" (*Men Are From Mars*, 5)

Men try to fix problems, while women desire empathy

"A man's sense of self is defined through his ability to
achieve results...To offer a man unsolicited advice is to
presume that he doesn't know what to do or that he can't
do it on his own...A woman's sense of self is defined
through her feelings and the quality of her relationships"
(*Men Are From Mars*, 16, 17, 18)

Love and Respect (2004) by Emerson Eggerichs: men need
respect, women need love

"Each one of you should **love** his wife as himself, and the
wife should **respect** her husband" (Eph. 5:33)

"Greeting cards are a clue into the minds of men and
women. Market studies show that, overwhelmingly, the
majority of cards in the United States are purchased by
women and given to women. Greeting cards are a
multimillion dollar business...They are out to make money,
so they produce what sells. Knowing that, I challenge you
to find a card from a husband to a wife that says, "Baby, I
really respect you"...That card isn't out there, because that
is not what a wife wants to hear...Unfortunately...you
won't find any greeting cards that wives send to their
husbands, saying, "Baby, I really respect you." Why not?
Because they don't sell either. When women buy greeting
cards for their husbands, they want to express love for
them; they don't even think about respect. Sadly, the
deepest yearning of husbands goes unmet because wives
(and card publishers) are locked into relaying sentiments
of love" (*Love and Respect*, 48)

"Go back to your days of courting. During courtship the

woman may have thought that her man was motivated to ask her to marry him because of her love. After all, love is what motivated her. In fact, her love was huge; there is no question about that. But more than she realized, it was her unique and intimate admiration that won her man's heart...Back in the courtship days, she became that woman and he bowed the knee and proposed. He felt deep feelings of love for her, but they came out of his being convinced that she respected him and admired him" (*Love and Respect*, 59)

Modern "dance steps" requires respecting differences between men and women, which helps in loving Jesus: He is Bridegroom, we are the Bride

Conclusion

TOB two-step and modern dance moves help us to love Jesus, who courts us, His Bride

TOB is not about a "theory" but about a Person, Jesus

"John Paul II writes, 'We are certainly not seduced by the naïve expectation that, faced with the great challenge of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula, but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: I am with you!' (*NMI*, n. 29)" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 127)

Life is learning to dance with Jesus