

## Sexless marriage and other relationship statistics

Posted on [February 24, 2017](#) by [Deep Strength](#)

[Dalrock's recent post on Wilcox](#) motivated me to dredge this up from my drafts folder about 8 months ago.

According to Nicholas B Wolfinger, one of the authors:

*Approximately 85 percent of Americans will marry in their lifetimes. Most will stay married, and most of these marriages will be happy. These are incontrovertible facts backed by survey after survey.*

We already know that 40-50% of marriages end in divorce, depending on who you get your statistics from. I don't see how that is a happy outcome in most cases. Of course, this is too common, so let's look at some other factors.

### Statistics

A few years back, some of us as SSM's were speculating how many marriages were actually sexless and/or unhappy even though they stayed together. I found some stats after stumbling onto [a wiki](#) about it.

*A sexless marriage is a marriage in which little or no sexual activity occurs between the two spouses. The US National Health and Social Life Survey in 1994 (Laumann et al. 1994) found that 2% of the married respondents reported no sexual intimacy in the past year. The definition of a non-sexual marriage is often broadened to include those where sexual intimacy occurs fewer than ten times per year, in which case 20 percent of the couples in the National Health and Social Life Survey would be in the category. Newsweek magazine estimates that 15 to 20 percent of couples are in a sexless relationship.[1] Studies show that 10% or less of the married population below age 50 have not had sex in the past year. In addition less than 20% report having sex a few times per year, or even monthly, under the age 40.[2]*

It appears that ~20% of marriages are what we would call sexless (<10 times per year) or about once a month.

We don't know how many of these marriages are going to end up in divorce. Some of these are headed for divorce for whatever reason. We don't really know how much adultery or other factors are going on either.

Other data show [similar qualities](#):

*More than 7 times a week: 3%*

*7 times a week: 1%*

*6 times a week: 3%*

*5 times a week: 9%*

*4 times a week: 11%*

*3 times a week: 13%*

*2 times a week: 21%*

*once a week: 25%*

*once a month: 8%*

*less than once a month: 9%*

Approximately 17% (once a month to less than once a month) are sexless. I would assume that most "once a weekers" are probably unhappy with that. The sex drive of men is typically higher than that of women, but women can become dissatisfied with lack of frequency as well.

We know that at the lowest 40% of marriages end in divorce. So if we assume that most of the sexless ~20% of marriages end in divorce, a large portion of those in the 25% once a week range are going to divorce as well. This doesn't take into account the potential dissolution of marriages with more frequency sex that have other problems.

I would suspect many of the cases with the approximate "once a week" don't actually do it "once a week" but are rather clustered together around a woman's ovulation cycle. So

maybe the week when said wife was ovulating. Otherwise, it'd just be another sexless marriage.

If you take the “once a weekers” with the sexless marriager, you get approximately 43% low sex marriages and 57% higher sex marriages. Not too far off from the regularly quoted divorce statistics.

More interesting is this:

### *How is your marriage set up?*

*Husband leads/in control: 22%*

*Equal, but husband is “more equal”: 33%*

*Egalitarian: 27%*

*Equal, but wife is “more equal”: 13%*

*Wife leads/in control: 4%*

We know that sex is commanded by the Scriptures in 1 Cor 7, but headship-submission and love-respect is also commanded.

The interesting split between the husband or “more husband led” marriages to the egalitarian and wife run marriages are 55% to 45%. The fact that the 45% of egalitarian or wife run marriages mirrors the divorce statistics isn't exactly that surprising to me.

### *Do you find your sex life fulfilling?*

*Yes: 53%*

*No: 47%*

The fact that it mirrors the divorce statistics is not at all surprising either.

## LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH ON MARRIAGE

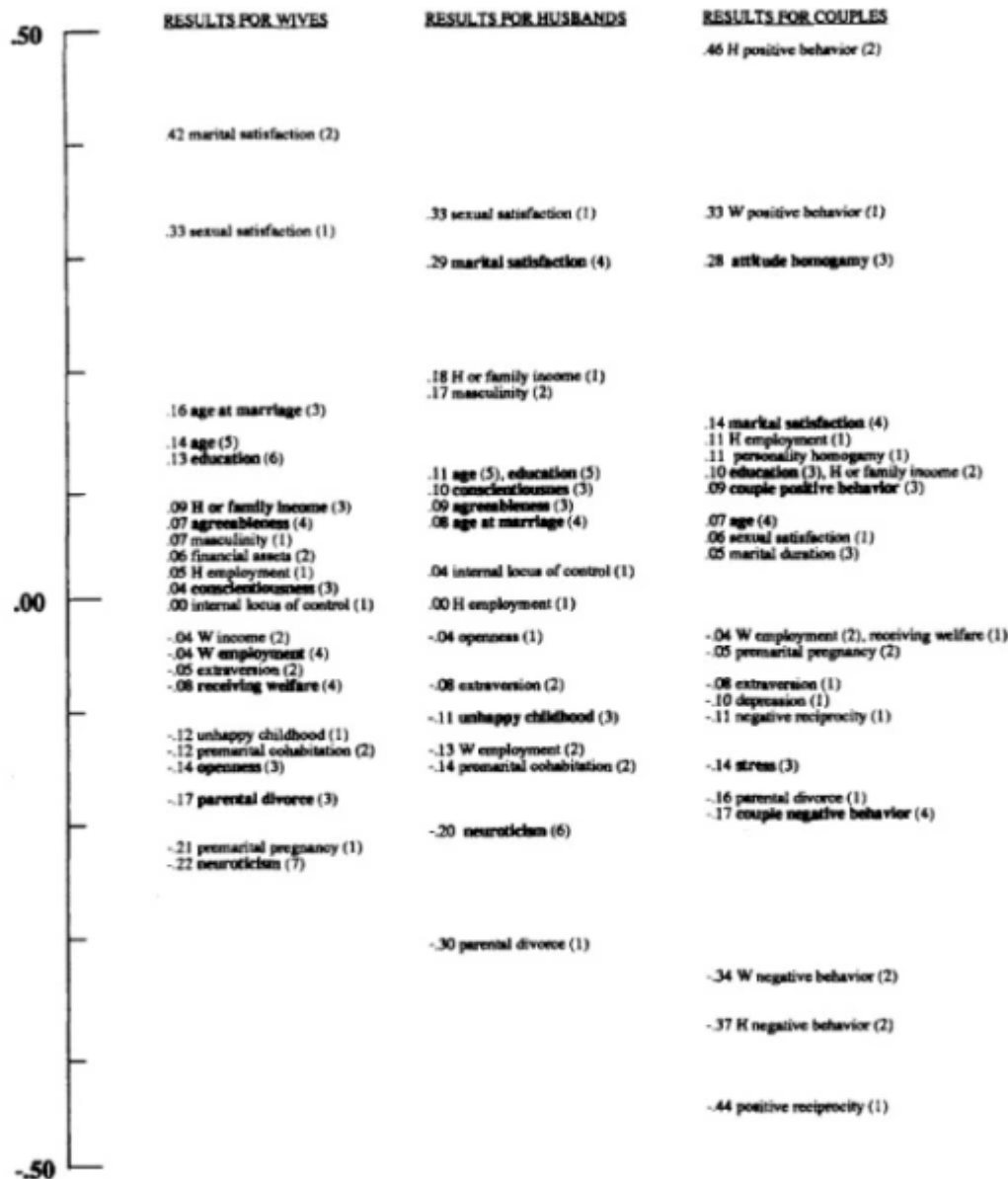


Figure 1. Aggregate effect-size  $r$ s of independent variables on the marital stability of wives, husbands, and couples. Numbers in parentheses represent the number of studies aggregated to estimate the effect. Entries in boldface are based on three or more studies. Variables in each column are measured for the individual or the couple. Where husbands' and wives' variables have been studied separately for their effects on each spouse has been indicated in the figure ( $H$  = husband,  $W$  = wife).

Some [longitudinal research on marriage](#) indicates that the greatest predictors of marital stability are:

- For both: the highest are Marital satisfaction and Sexual satisfaction
- Husband/family Income and masculinity for men
- Age, age at marriage, education, and Husband/family income for women
- For couples: positive behavior and attitude homogeneity

The Scriptures are indeed wise ranking sexual satisfaction and specific roles and responsibilities high on the lists.

Of course, negative indicators are:

- For both: Depression, negative reciprocal [behavior], stress, parental divorce, couple negative behavior, and positive reciprocity.
- For women: Receiving welfare, unhappy childhood, premarital cohabitation, openness, parental divorce, premarital pregnancy, and neuroticism.
- For men: extraversion, unhappy childhood, (lack of) employment, neuroticism, and parental divorce.

In general, it looks like a list of things the Bible says to avoid, barring a few.

Interesting how parental divorce more negatively affects men than women, but it affects men more so. This is also why vetting for background and character is important.

It's interesting that lots of the indicators on headship-submission, masculinity, roles of the husband and wife, and sexual frequency all come out to the 40-50% range which actually represents the approximate amount of divorces. It's almost as if the One who inspired the Scriptures who was also the author of marriage knew what He was talking about.

Even the "secular" marriages tend to follow the natural law that was created by God.

### **Other statistics**

I'm some others from [Kinsey's FAQ](#).

*Median number of opposite-sex partners in lifetime among U.S. men and women aged 25-44 years of age is 6.6 for men and 4.3 for women.  
(National Center for Health Statistics, 2015)*

Men lie by overinflating. Women lie by underinflating. Since it a man and a woman for every sexual encounter, the true rate is somewhere between them.

*Percentage of men and women aged 15-44 years of age who have had 15 or more opposite-sex sexual partners in their lifetime is **21.8%** for men, and **10.6%** for women. (National Center for Health Statistics, 2015)*

20% rule anyone? Although, we can't tell if said men were overinflating. I would be interested to see the full stats on partner breakdown.

***Over 50%** of respondents ages 18-24 indicated that their most recent sexual partner was a casual or dating partner. For all other age groups, the majority of study participants indicated that their most recent sexual partner was a relationship partner. (National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior, 2010).*

Hookup culture is real. For every relationship you see, there are as many hookups.

*Men and women both were likely to report sexual satisfaction if they also reported frequent kissing and cuddling, sexual caressing by the partner, higher sexual functioning, and if they had sex more frequently. On the other hand, for men, having had more sex partners in their lifetime was a predictor of less sexual satisfaction.*

Men become jaded to sex too. The so-called 'player burnout.'

***[KI]** Frequent kissing or cuddling predicted happiness in the relationship for men, but not for women. Both men and women reported more happiness the longer they had been together.*

Surprise, men are the real romantics.

In any case, there's lots of conclusions to be had here, and they all align with the Scriptures.

- Frigidity in marriage is a sin. Have lots of sex.
- Husband led marriages are more successful.
- Men are providers and masculine. Women ages and age at marriage are important and value of men's provision. Education may correlate with better self control and long term planning in women.
- Positive behavior and attitudes are important. (Rather, godly attitudes and behavior).
- Vet for divorce risk via factors such as depression, negative reciprocal [behavior], stress, parental divorce, couple negative behavior, positive reciprocity. For women: receiving welfare, unhappy childhood, premarital cohabitation, openness, parental divorce, premarital pregnancy, and neuroticism. For men: extraversion, unhappy childhood, (lack of) employment, neuroticism, and parental divorce.