# Dive Deep with Dr. Kevin Leman

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Jill Savage: We are so excited to welcome Dr. Kevin Leman as our Dive Deep interview this month. I first met Dr. Leman at a Hearts at Home conference, when we brought him in as a keynote speaker. I love his books, his wisdom, and his humor. Welcome, Dr. Leman.

**Dr. Kevin Leman**: Thank you.

JS: Dr. Leman is the author of 60 books and has been married 50 years. I think he's got something to bring to us today. We're going to talk particularly about his newest book, which is *Have a New Sex Life By Friday*.

MS: Before we do that, Dr. Leman, I want to read the front cover of your book. We want to ask the folks who are following us today: do any of these describe you? "*You can't remember the last time your spouse gave you a real kiss or held your hand. You're stuck in a rut in the bedroom. You can predict the exact spot your spouse will touch you. You undress in the walk-in closet. The last book you read about sex was your pre-marital counselling. If even one of these describe you, you need this book.*" And we are agreeing, you need this book.

JS: You'll love it. What inspired you to write *Have a New Sex Life by Friday*?

KL: Quite frankly, I think those of us in the church have done a lousy job of talking about sex. Sex is such a wonderful gift from God. Why don't we talk about it, why don't we share it, why don't we talk to our kids easily about it? It's one of those areas that people just have a very difficult time dealing with. They call me a humorist. That's a big word for “*I can make people laugh*.” I think the all-time, greatest comedian ever was the Almighty God, when through St. Paul's lips he said, "*And the two shall become one*." God, that is outrageously funny. You made those women in such a weird way and us men in such a strange way, and yet You ask us to become one. I think God made it that way, quite frankly so that we really must work at being married to this creature that is so different from us in so many ways. By the way, here's a disclaimer. I got married because I was sick and tired of finishing my own sentences.

JS: I love that.

MS: As we continue, tell us a little bit about your family. What are you passionate about?

KL: Well, I've started schools out in Arizona and Colorado; Leman Academy of Excellence. They're Charter schools, and that's keeping me out of trouble and keeping me off the streets these days. In terms of marriage, I just don't think we talk candidly about sex. I spoke at Rick Warren's church in California on sex. I just spoke in Phoenix Arizona, 28,000 people in the church. When the Pastor called and asked me to talk about sex, I said, "*Wait a minute, this isn't my first rodeo, Pastor. I want to know specifically, what kind of words would you expect to come out of my mouth on a Saturday night service and a Sunday morning service?*" And he said, "*Well, words like orgasm.*" And I said, "*Hmm.* *Okay. If that's what you want, that's what you're going to get.*" Rick Warren told me that I hold a record for tape requests from outside speakers. I think it's because we just don't talk about life as it really is. I think if you're asking what I have a passion for, it's trying to communicate the truth in love. I admit I use humor, because I realize it's a tough subject to talk about. How many couples woke up today and said, "*You know what I'd like to do? I'd like to talk to our son or daughter about sex today.*" It doesn't happen.

JS: You said the church isn't talking about it, but quite frankly, couples aren't talking about it, either.

MS: Right.

KL: Everybody talks about it. They talk about it most of the time in a very flippant and negative way, and certainly not in a sacred, pure, wonderful way it should be talked about.

JS: That's what we have certainly found as well. We gave couples 20 questions to talk with each other about sex for one of the date nights that we include in our membership. We got quite a bit of feedback from people saying, "*That was the first time we have ever talked about sex outside the bedroom. Even inside the bedroom, we very rarely even talk about it*." I think you're right; we need to talk about it. Particularly as Christians, I think we're uncomfortable talking about it, so I appreciate that you are so open.

KL: This is a statement I want people to really think about. If you think our God that we worship is some kind of sexual prude, then in my opinion, you don't know God. Chew on that for a while, because he designed us the way we are, and he gave men that ability. We men are weird. I have five kids and we have kids at every age possible. I got my wife pregnant at 42, again at 48, we had the little shocker. When I first met my wife, I was a janitor in a hospital. I had been thrown out of college. I was also thrown out of Cub Scouts in fourth grade, as well, so I was a problem child. I met my wife in the men's restroom of a hospital. You can't make things up like that, folks. She was strikingly beautiful, and we started to date. I fell in love like a ton of bricks and I knew there was something different about this chick.

KL: Well, I grew up in a Christian home, but I had no use for God. I rejected everything my parents tried to teach me, but this chick had me going. I was in love, and about three and a half months into the relationship, she pops the question. "*Would you like to go to church with me*?" I remember thinking, “*Holy cow, she's one of them*.” One thing I didn't want to do is go to church. I lied right through my teeth and said, "*Yeah, I'd love to go to church with you*." I remember sitting in her church thinking, "*No chick's worth this, this is brutal*." She wanted me to come back to church that night. That night, everything that happened was supernatural. I walked out of that church a new person. God gave me motivation. I never looked back and 50 years later, five kids later, four grandchildren later, here we are.

KL: You know, you slow down when you're older. You slow down physically, emotionally, and certainly sexually. We're down to four or five times a week now, but I'm dealing with it as best as we can.

JS: I love it. We've been reading your book, and we want to jump in and kind of just give a little bit of an overview. One of the things that you talk about is, why we need sex. But I noticed you say, why do women *need* sex? Why do men *want* sex? Talk about that for a moment.

KL: That's an interesting discussion. I go back to the Creator, and He created us in this way. Let's talk about the needs of men. Around the country, every speaker I ever hear says, "*Oh, respect is number one in a man's life*". I don't believe that's true. I think men need to feel needed and wanted, by who?

JS: By their wife.

KL: By their wives! We have no friends. Men sit in a tree with their guns in the fall and wait for Bambi's great grandfather to come over the hill. They fish in boats together and don't talk. They don't communicate. Men are islands by themselves, and they specialize in arm’s length relationship. I think it was our late colleague and friend, Gary Smalley who first said that men are like microwaves and women are like crock pots.

JS: Right.

KL: There's a lot of truth to that. It goes back to our design, but a man needs to have a bride who will become assertive in the bedroom. I've been around a long time, and I know that it's a struggle for many women to be assertive in the bedroom. Ladies, the words you choose to use can light up your husband big time. When you say, "*Hey, I need you, I want you*" I wrote an op-ed for Fox News entitled "*Want Your Kids to Talk? Try This*." Kids and husbands are very, very similar. Number one, we don't like your questions. In fact, to tell you the truth, we hate your questions. We hate the word *“why.”* Women are the great communicators. They're always asking husbands questions, and husbands routinely go on the defensive. We find it very hard to enter our wife’s life when she's asking us questions.

KL: If you say to your husband, "*Honey, could I ask your opinion about something?*" your husband will talk your ear off. So will your kid. You have to understand who this man is, and why he needs that sex. It's the peanut butter and jelly of the sandwich. It's the glue for the man, more in a practical sense for men than women. Women love affection. A man who doesn't understand affection will become a world class “*grabber.*” I've never heard a woman say, "*I just love it when my husband grabs me*." Women want to be held, they want to be talked to. I call you Velcro women. Everybody wants a piece of you. Your kids, your church bazaar, your science school teacher. I'll answer the question if someone is asking it in their head, "*Is a quickie okay?*" A quickie is very okay.

KL: Love does not demand its own way; you learn to love the other person in the way, shape, and form they want to be loved. The Bible says the wedding bed cannot be defiled. I think the constraints that we put on ourselves are man-made. I love it when I talk with a couple who has done some risk taking, and there must have been a lot of trust there. I mean, being vulnerable to another person in a purely sexual sensual spiritual way. I'm in my kitchen right now, and I'm looking at the countertops. In the Leman family, foreplay, for me is: I've got to have that countertop cleaned off. She insists I put the toaster away. I've learned with this first-born wife to make sure I don't leave a mess, or she will infer that I think she's going to pick up my mess, which infuriates her. I've learned that that's part of foreplay. Sex is an all-day affair, and my challenge to couples is, if you don't have an affair with your husband or your wife somebody else will.

MS: I still remember one of your early books, "*Sex Begins in the Kitchen*." I thought, "*Awesome, I want this book*." I bought it, and I've read it, and it said that very thing; that sex is an all-day event.

KL: There's a chapter in that book called, "*How to Make Love To Your Wife Without Ever Setting Foot in the Bedroom*" I have gutted that book and I'm revising it. I just revised the book "*Making Children Mind Without Losing Yours*." I was reading it one day and I said, "*Boy, this is getting old*." There wasn't much high-tech stuff in it. I just went into "*Sex Begins in The Kitchen*" to try to update and revise that in a major way. Folks, if you're struggling with marriage, there's help at every turn. These guys you're listening to, they do marriage stuff all the time. There's people around who can really help. There's really no excuse for not being able to make it in a marriage today. I’ll admit, we men are strange. We can eat a pizza belching in our boxer shorts, watching two ball games simultaneously. Yes, ladies, that is your gift from Almighty God.

KL: I'm just telling you, he's a man. Don't put a skirt on him. I love being a man, because when I go to my friend's house, I don't have to bring him a little gift. I don't have to share my food with anybody, I do my nails at a red light with my front teeth. Let men be men and women be women. I think the Creator has created us in such a way that this great explosion can come together. Here's a question for you to chew on... who is designed to enjoy sex more, men or women? The answer is clearly women.

JS: Why?

KL: Because of their sexual response. Everybody put your big girl pants or big boy pants on for a second. I'm going to ask you a question. How long is your wife's clitoris? You got an answer? Somebody is saying, "*Well, I would say it's a quarter of an inch long*." Well, you're eight and three quarters inches off. That little sucker is nine inches long, and it runs right through a woman's body. She is created in such a way that if she has a loving husband, and she feels loved, her sexual response to this man will scare you.

JS: Because they can come in waves.

KL: Oh, yeah, waves. I'm telling you, it's downright frightening. I'm just saying practically, compare that to a man's sexual response. Who's the tough one to get there? It's the woman. Why? Because she needs this man who's like the great conductor of the orchestra who brings the woodwinds and the brass and the violins up. Everything has to fall in place for a woman. She's got valleys to get through, hills to get over, mountain tops to strive for. For us men, mister happy, he is about as low maintenance as they come. He just gets excited.

DL: On top of that, he wakes up happy, which is a whole other problem.

JS: It's really interesting; when I was writing my book "*Is There Really Sex After Kids?*" almost 20 years ago, I ran across a statement in one of the books about the female body. The only reason the clitoris is on the female body is for sexual pleasure. That was a huge eye opener to me, because I've thought oftentimes, women think of sex as just for men. I think that that's a message from our Creator, that He would give women a part of their body that had no other purpose than sexual pleasure. That's huge.

KL: That's a profound thought. People should really savor that. It's true. Our youngest daughter is 25, and they're all pretty well embarrassed over the fact that mom and dad, who've been married 50 years are still getting it on. As my dad told me once, "*Many a tune in an old violin, Kevin*." I've learned to live those words that he shared with me years ago. And back to your question, we need each other.

KL: Barbra Streisand sang a song once called "*People.*" "*People, people who need people*" are what? The luckiest people in the world. Think about the last time you looked in your husband's eyes and said, "*Honey, I need you*." Or the last time you looked in your wife's eyes and said, "*Honey, I need you*." That vulnerability is what gives you a chance to come together. You prayed before we started this today, and my advice to couples everywhere is to pray together, audibly. A lot of people tell me, "*No, I really like to pray by myself.*" I think by doing that we keep our mate at bay. If you want to be thoroughly married, it's spiritually, and it's physically, emotionally, and certainly sexually.

JS: You talk in your book about getting behind your spouse's eyes. Let’s talk about that for a moment.

KL: You have to see life from behind your bride's perspective. We've been lied to in our society. There's a huge movement saying that men and women are the same, but they’re not. They can see the same stimuli and different parts of the brain will light up. I've learned, I can think like a woman. I've learned that my wife likes gentleness. She loves it when I do things without her asking me to do it. She loves it when I take the lead on things. Now, is my wife a doormat? No. She's had her own business. She's a great lady. Our house, I wish I could walk you around and show you some of the stuff in this house. Women come to our house, and they don't want to leave one room and go to the next room, because they can't take it all in. My wife is very artsy and she's got all kinds of little things in this house that women drool over.

KL: It's not my thing, I'll tell you the truth. If I've got an easy chair and a TV set, and some popcorn, I'm a happy dude. I grew up in Buffalo, New York, so I'm a simple person. I'm a one-forker, she's a five-forker. I go to bed early, she's a raccoon, she's nocturnal. She's up half the night reading. Isn't that amazing that two people who are so different from each other can say, after 50 years of marriage, "*We still write our mate love notes*." I'll be on the road and I'll find a little shoebox card in my suitcase that says, "*I miss you already*." It's saying those words of endearment that helps keep the fires burning as you grow older together.

JS: You talk in the book about making love with words.

KL: Yes. I'm so glad you brought that up, because it's the words that we choose to use that can change relationships. I would suggest to you that relationships can certainly change. Remember, I said something about kids and husbands have some commonalities. Again, we husbands hate questions.

KL: I'll give you a little vignette. My wife's a five forker, as I mentioned. She loves nice restaurants with people with different colored jackets on and all that. I hate those places. I'm a one forker, no problema. We were in a really nice restaurant, and the waiter came over after to the table after the meal. He said, "*Are you going to be joining us for dessert*?" I thought, "*Is he going to sit with us*?" I said, "*Honey, it's your call. What do you want to do?*" She said, "*Oh, well. No, I don't think so*." I can't make this stuff up. 10 minutes later, we were driving home, and my wife said to me, "*Do you want to stop for ice cream?*" And I said, "*No.*" I kept driving. I looked over, and tears were streaming down her face. I said, "*What's wrong*?" And this is what she said: "*Nothing.*" I'm telling you, women lie like dogs. "*What do you mean there's nothing wrong, you're crying. What is wrong with you?*" She said, "*I want to stop for ice cream.*"

KL: Gentlemen, listen to me. When your wife says to you, "*Honey, would you like to stop for ice cream?*" or whatever it is, she is not asking a question. That's one of the ways I ask men to get behind their wife's eyes and see how she lives life. When she asks you a question, she's not asking a question. By the way, there's not a man watching us right now who wants to hear his wife say, "*Honey, we need to talk."* We hate that because we know we're going to get it.

JS: So, what should she say?

KL: She should really just say, "*Honey, ice cream sounds good to me. What do you think*?" Let the man say, "*Oh, okay*." Let him please you. Sometimes you have to get our attention by the two-by-four method. We're not as close to life as women are. They're much better at communication. They use three and a half times the number of words that we use in a given week. They thrive on relationships. We don't thrive on relationships as men. If you put those kids before your husband, somebody's going to pay for that sooner or later.

JS: Yeah, I know, that's a huge one, and that was a mistake we made in the early years. I was going to ask you about that. When we think about sex, let's talk about two challenging times. One is, when we have littles. What wisdom do you have for people that still have kids at home? Number one, keep your marriage a priority, but number two, be practical about that sex life.

KL: You have to understand that fatigue is just a major thing for a young mom. I recall the night that we went to one of these four forkers. It wasn't a five forker, but it was still a nice restaurant. We were driving home, and I pulled into a resort hotel. In Tucson, in the month of May, for example, when it starts getting warm, you can get a $350 hotel room for $59. I pulled into this hotel and my wife said, "*So what are we doing here? What are we doing here?*" I said, "*We're going in the hotel.*" This is a quote. "*I don't know what you got in your mind, but I am not getting out of this car*."

KL: Now, I would call that an uncooperative spirit. I went over to open the car door, and she'd locked it. I popped the door open and literally lifted her up. Looking at her body language, she was saying, "*I'm going to go, but you're not going to have a good time.*" You can't make up a story like this. This is part of my life I've lived, but I think it serves to point to your question about kids and women who are exhausted. It gets back to knowing who your wife is.

KL: I took her up to this king size bedroom. It was called a junior suite. I was already in the room that afternoon, and there were three books there waiting for her. She loves mysteries. She reads them over and over again. I had a little card for her with a little note, and I had pulled back the sheets on the bed. I called room service and ordered her a pot of real coffee. She's a raccoon, she's up half the night, and a triple layer chocolate cake. I kissed her good night and told her I'd be back at 1:00 to pick her up.

JS: The next day?

KL: Yeah. I went home and took the babysitter home. My wife is a first-born, and she's a voracious reader. I know her well enough. I'm the baby of the family. I want to be there with her, I want people around me. I guess I’m a showman in some ways, because I like to make people laugh. But I've learned that she needs time by herself. At that time, we had three little kids. When I say I'll pick her up at 1:00, she's up at 12:30. That's when she gets up. It's knowing who this gift is from God. You have to know her. In about 15% of our marriages that I look at, the woman's the aggressor, not the man. The man is saying, "*I'm too tired*," or, "*I have a headache*."

KL: I'll leave you with this thought. When a couple walks down the flowers strewn aisle, how many people are being married? When you said those sacred vows in front of God, family, friends, how many people got married? Some people says "*Well, two*." I say, "*Well, okay. You're close. It's six.* *If your parents are divorced, it might be 10*." The bottom line is, you marry your in-laws. You either reap the benefit of what's back there in your background, or you don’t. Some of you, quite frankly, have toxic parents. You are taking out that toxic material baggage in your past on the one you love, which makes no sense whatsoever. There's a lot to think about. There's a lot of good books on marriage. There's good books on sex. There's really not a reason why you can't make this work.

JS: You just have to prioritize it, don't you?

MS: Right.

KL: Yeah.

JS: We have one question that we ask every person that we interview for a No more Perfect Date Night. That is: what's your favorite date night for you and your wife? Do you have a favorite?

KL: Well, I'm afraid it's going to go back to another quick story.

MS: We'd like that.

JS: If you've got time, we've got time.

KL: Before I married her, I liked to fish. So I said, “*Honey, do you like fishing?" "Oh, I love fishing." "Good. Camping?" "Oh, I love camping.*" Well, she's finally admitted that what she meant was she thought she *might* like fishing and camping. My ideal date night would be to pack up, find a little trout stream someplace, walk the trout stream together and fish, and then find a very green meadow that is somewhat secluded from the world, and have a wonderful time in that green grass. That would be a Kevin Leman perfect date night. And let me point out that date night has never happened.

KL: It's in my dreams. My wife is so cute. She's adorable. I don't know anybody who doesn't love my wife. I'd give you zip codes full of people who don't like me. I read my mail. But, to answer your question succinctly, I literally like to be with my wife anywhere. If I'm just with her, I'm a happy dude. I don't have to always be engaging her in conversation. I could be laying on her lap looking at her while she reads a book, and I'm a happy dude.

KL: At this stage of our life, I come in at night and I'll take a sniff of the house. If I don't smell food, I know I'm going to do a U-turn.

KL: Some nights, I'll say, "*Honey, I'm really hungry*," and she'll say, "*Check the couch under the cushions. There might be something there.*" Just a simple, quick dinner out-we both like to eat early now-and then just coming home and being together, I'm a happy dude. We're simple. People think, "*Oh, that Leman, he must live some kind of jet-set life*." It's not true. We live a very simple basic life, we’ve been in the same Bible study for 30 years, and I still don't understand Revelation, if anyone asks.

MS: Yeah. Well, this has been enjoyable. It's been great, challenging, and some great perspectives. I so appreciate that, Dr. Leman.

JS: Yeah. Thank you very much.

KL: Remember. God isn’t a prude.

MS: Right.

JS: Absolutely. Agreed.

KL: He wants you to enjoy each other.

JS: Thank you for joining us. We are so grateful for your willingness to share not only your wisdom, but also your experience from your imperfect marriage. One of the things we say here is, “*There are no perfect marriages, but a real marriage is two people being perfected.*” That's really what we found marriage to be. Thank you for sharing with us and with our members.

KL: You're welcome. Jill, you know you're one of my favorites. Let me just say, your hubby is a lucky dude to be able to hang out with you on a permanent basis. God bless you both, thanks for having me on. It’s been a pleasure to be with you.