

**SETTING
the
CAPTIVES FREE**

Overcoming Sexual Brokenness

Peter and Dot Lane Rai

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*Thanks to those who had the courage
to share the pain of their sexual struggles
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to bring wholeness and healing
to the sexually and relationally broken.
you are an inspiration!
for all our friends who have prayerfully,
practically and financially supported
our ministry since 1978.
you are so faithful!*

FOREWORD

Camps and conferences generally were supposed to be about telling people who are seeking God about God. And so a previous assumption years ago, was that the young people who sit in front of you are those who have heard about God, are inclined towards spiritual things and lead lives of victory. Well, these days there is a new reality: we find people who come and attend a Christian conference are struggling with issues related to their sexuality.

In my experience in India as a youth worker, things are probably now no different from the west. There are a large number of young Indians that I meet who have problems related to their sexuality, yet who really care about God and their relationship with Him. Some of them,

who muster courage to come and share with me, talk about their intense daily struggles they face with sexuality. We also see a growing number of young people who have been sexually abused as children and many Christian youth who have lost their virginity. There are also those men and women whom I have met in all kinds of institutions, including theological colleges, who have same-sex attractions.

If they only had to face personal problems, then we could help them more easily and enable them to move on in life. Yet I believe the problem is much larger. Living in a sex-saturated world is causing many to have problems in their spiritual life. Having made wrong decisions about sexuality, many now have become addicted to a destructive sexual lifestyle. I have talked to young people sobbing inconsolably, lamenting their total helplessness as a result of their sexual immorality.

In an age where the INTERNET has become so common, young people, including Christians in countries like India have suddenly had unlimited access to sexual partners, and often unhelpful and non-Biblical information on sexuality. One level of sexual behaviour no longer satisfies and so they often have to increase sexual activity, or get involved in more unpleasant sexual activities. It is the law of diminishing returns that works here.

I first met Peter and Dot Lane Rai in 2003 at a conference in Bangalore where they were speaking on Homosexuality. Since then I have had opportunities to

meet them during their annual ministry trips to India. I have seen their passion to help the sexually broken captives become free which they have written about in this book.

In walking with a Holy God, being pure and living victoriously is not an option. My prayer is that God will use the book to help many who are seeking a way out of sexual and relational brokenness to know freedom, healing and wholeness in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual Revolution in Asia

A sexual revolution is sweeping across Asia Pacific where nearly 60% of the world's seven billion people live. In China and Malaysia the revolution resembles gathering monsoon clouds ready to drop rain and in the Pacific, like Papua New Guinea, a slow burning fire. Whether rain or fire, this revolution will either drench or burn many in its path. Not only those of Asia's major religious groups like Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus, but also the minority religions like India's Christians (2%) and Sikhs (2%).

In the Pacific, where the population in a country is often 95% Christians and 2% eastern religions, the revolution still touches lives. It has already swept across Australia. Neither does it ignore the agnostics, atheists,

and religious holy men or the old, young, single and married.

This revolution, already affecting Asia's cities, which include 12 of the world's 25 largest mega cities, also reaches villages in the snowy mountainous Himalayas. Unstoppable, it then sweeps down to fishing villages basking in Fiji's tropical sun.

Across Asia, as in many other parts of the world, people are discarding and challenging a morality and sexuality based on traditional religious and family values which had previously been accepted for thousands of years. (In the Western world this is called "post modernism," the deconstruction of traditional moral, spiritual and social values). Meantime the parents, grandparents (and even great grandparents), sometimes all living under the same roof as the revolutionaries, are in shock over this sexual revolution.

There is plenty to be shocked about.

In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, there were some surprising events:

- 1991 Asia's first gay organization.
- 1998 "Lesbianism and sex workers" was on the agenda of the Indonesian Women's conference.
- 1999 The first gay pride parade in Asia was held in Indonesia.
- 2003 Indonesia was seeking to introduce new laws that made gay sex for those under eighteen years a

crime. The punishment for homosexual sex could be between one to seven years imprisonment.

In India, the world's largest democracy:

- 1998 Lesbianism was on the agenda of the all India Women's Conference.
- 1998 "Fire" the controversial Indian movie of an emotional relationship between two married women, was banned after it created riots.
- 1999 *Facing the Mirror* the book of lesbian writings by Mumbai author, Ashwini Sakthnagar.
- "Incest is epidemic in middle class" was the disturbing article in *The Hindustan Times*, India, 13 June 1999.
- New Delhi Police said that of 6,700 cases of marital harassments registered in 2002, 10% were of women harassing and beating up their husbands.
- 2009 India's High Court decriminalized homosexuality

Other Asian countries:

- Sept 2000, Newsweek, *Out of the closet in Hong Kong* about homosexuality in Hong Kong.
- March 2001 Time magazine, *Sex in Asia* reported on sexually promiscuous Asians.
- 2001 former Malaysian deputy Prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, was imprisoned on sodomy charges.

- April 16, 2002, The Hong Kong Mail wrote on one of China's 400,000 transsexuals who in 1995, was a Colonel in the People's Army.
- In 2002 the debate on homosexuality in the media and the church was intense when the Singapore Government gave an open invitation for gays to work in Singapore.
- 9th August, 2003 Singapore's National Day, gays and lesbians celebrated their sexuality at Sentosa Island in a night of song, dance and gay festivity.
- "In time the population will understand that some people are born that way," (i.e. homosexual) *Goh Chok Tong, Singapore Prime Minister 7th July, 2003. Time magazine.*
- October 2003. *A World Without Women*, written by a Vietnamese journalist, about the gay scene in Vietnam won Vietnam's Literary Award. A pre-operative transsexual's story also made national headlines.

These events tell us there is more in the Asia Pacific air than the smell of curry and spices.

Before you think that sexuality only affects men, Asia Pacific's women have been equally affected. Sexual abuse figures in India are horrendous. Crimes of rape, sexual and physical abuse and murder against women have soared in the last 10 years from 130,000 in 1998 to 150,000 in the year 2000.

(National Crimes Bureau of India.)

It is often related to the growing middle class demanding and gifts of dowry for marriage such as motor-scooters. Also the mother in law of the bride is often involved in the violence. Yet amazingly sometimes women are the abusers, even in India. The "All India Front Against Atrocities by Wives" claims to have 40,000 abused husbands who are members in 400 branches.

In Indonesia, overseas paedophiles are linked to procuring young girls for sex, while Japanese businessmen have a preference for schoolgirl prostitutes.

In Thailand, prostitutes can earn twenty-five times the income of a girl in a textile factory, which is quite an incentive for them not to be factory workers.

Poverty is one of the contributors to the sexual revolution, brought about by natural disasters such as flood and drought which caused crops to fail. When crops fail; there is no food or money. Thus in many parts of Asia, millions are most concerned with the immediate daily basics of life such as the need for food, water and shelter. They also seek freedom from oppression, discrimination and injustice. Therefore, in parts of drought stricken Rajasthan, India, prostitution is accepted as a way of life where women's earnings support whole village communities. Driven by poverty from their rural settings, the poor seek work in the urban Asian cities.

In "Up Country" Hatton, Sri Lanka, tea workers despairing about only earning US \$1 daily, head with their

family for the bright lights of the nation's capital, Colombo. When they find no work, poverty stricken, they become squatters near one of Colombo's beaches. This is also an area that attracts sex tourists from overseas. Here the male child of the former tea worker prostitutes himself to tourists. The family probably knows and even encourages what he does. Thus, he is a valid supplier of money to meet the family's needs if they are to survive.

Yet they are at risk, as one HIV infected German tourist on a sex holiday passed HIV on to twenty-five Colombo prostitutes. China's millions of prostitutes who don't use condoms are also at risk.

Lonely Planet Publications for Asia which has information on "gay travellers", AIDS etc. shows there is an Asian Gay and lesbian culture. In the West, to be gay or lesbian is a politics of identity. In Asia, gayness is different to western gayness, being more confined to the western-educated group.

Gays in India can be seen as elitist and foreign, whereas *Koti* is the name given to non-English speaking, lower middle or working class transgender homosexuals. Thus, there is not a strong gay movement in Asia compared to the West but there are the gay bars, discos, on-line chat groups and even religious groups such as Metropolitan Community Church which were in major cities. The gay scene in Asia is therefore more a safe place, a larger closet for gays rather than a visible vocal life of political demonstrations. As in other parts of the world, Asian gay

activists have used the AIDS education programmes to promote their lifestyle.

One of the dark faces of the sexual revolution is sexually transmitted disease. AIDS is one of these. HIV/AIDS in Asia Pacific is an estimated 5 million, some saying the figure is much higher.

"Live a healthy lifestyle" warns a grim reaper poster on a wall in Tanah Rata, 6000 feet up in Malaysia's Cameron Highlands. A sticker makes the same warning on a train toilet door on India's sweltering plains or in a hospital in Papua New Guinea's Western Highlands. The only problem is, if you are illiterate then you cannot read warnings about risky sexual behaviors. A worker in an AIDS clinic in Fiji told me she saw a greater incidence of STD's in this island paradise than she did in the West.

Raju from South India was neither poor nor illiterate. He was a married, born-again Christian and even though a Bible College student, he had sex with a prostitute carrying HIV. He unknowingly became infected with HIV and then passed it on to his pregnant wife, Rani. Fortunately, when I met them in 2004, neither were sick with HIV and mercifully the baby had not contracted HIV.

Sadly, statistics indicate around 25% of those with HIV/AIDS are married women, (www.unaids.org) like Rani infected by their unfaithful husband. Of those living with HIV/AIDS, across South and South East Asia, over 36% are women, and in East Asia and the Pacific 24% are

women (BBC News, 26 November 2002). The tragedy is that the wife's faithfulness has made her vulnerable to the consequences of her husband's sexual unfaithfulness.

Of the 1,600 HIV/AIDS Philippino cases, up to 25% were from the 866,590 Philipinos who had returned from working overseas. *Straits Times June 24, 2002.*

This sexual revolution certainly did not happen overnight.

First historically, the Church, since the second century, has regarded sex as unclean and not a gift from God. Augustine of Hippo (354- 430 AD) wrote, "Sex transmits original sin, therefore it is corrupt." This has not helped people feel good about sex.

With reference to the Church in Asia Pacific, it's response to sexuality can be described in one word - *silence.*

An Indian pastor put it well when he said to me, "In India, with the world's largest population, we do 'sex' the most but talk about it the least." He meant that sex is not discussed, in either the Church or in the home. Yet you don't have to be in India long to be aware of the abundance of phallic symbols and the sensuality of some religious statues that confront you everywhere. Another pastor from Indonesia said, "If I talk about sex from the pulpit, my congregation will think that I have a problem with sex."

In the seminars and Church meetings that my wife and I have held in Asia we have asked, "Did you get any

teaching on sexuality from the Church?" The inevitable answer was "No".

We estimate only 4% said they received any teaching on sexuality from the Church. In Sri Lanka and Fiji it was 0%. Indian Catholic priests and nuns informed us of the compulsory pre-marriage counselling on sexuality and sex for those about to be married and of sex education for those at school. Yet, when I asked young single, or married Catholics if they had received any sexual education from the Church they said "no". So why is there this apparent contradiction? There is no doubt that these Catholics received sexual education based on Biblical morals and information about the physical aspects of sex. What they probably did not discuss were the emotional and relational issues of sexuality such as "Can I be truly spiritual and have sexual desires?" "What are the differences between male and female sexuality?" "Can Christians struggle with sexuality?"

In a Catholic boy's school in India, run by priests, when I spoke on sexuality, I was asked, "Is masturbation a sin?" I gave my reply emphasising I was a Protestant. The priests made no comments which made me wonder whether they were too embarrassed to speak.

When the Church and parents are silent on sexuality, young people inevitably get their sexual education from friends.

The Sex Education Survey via AIDS Line in Colombo, Sri Lanka revealed of 868 people surveyed in Jan 2000 to Mar 2001, 496 Females in Colombo, (61.5%), 610 Females

in Hill Country, (64.5%), 504 Males in Colombo, (61.0%) and 505 Males in Hill Country, (37.5%) learned sex from friends.

If your friends can't talk about sexuality, then there is the Internet with its over 10 million pornographic sites to choose from. Here we see the flood of filth the sexual revolution brings with it. In India some Internet shops warn that the use of pornography sites is banned and transgressors will be reported.

There is also television, DVD's or cinema, where many young people get their sexual education or role models of masculinity and femininity. However, it is often promoting alternative sexual values and morals to traditional family and religious based morality.

Mary, age 43 is a Chinese Christian from Singapore, She learnt from movies that men were aggressive and that a women's role in life was just to meet men's needs! Even though she unfairly carries the shame of being single, and often is lonely, she does not want to get married.

So while the sexual revolution marches on, we can see that sadly, in the area of sexuality, the traditional Church is not doing very much. Yet Christian ministries are involved in AIDS work such as Nireekshana, Hyderabad, India, or ESCAPE, a ministry to the sexually abused in Colombo, Sri Lanka and Living Waters, (to the sexually and relationally broken) in Australia, New Zealand and now in some Asian countries, and Exodus Asia Pacific (Australia and NZ) and Exodus East Asia. As such the

Christian response to the sexual and relational problems is but a drop in the ocean of the need brought by the sexual revolution.

So it is time for the Church to address the issue of sexuality which for too long it has been silent about. Many Christians are confused and fearful of it. Thus, we need a Christian response to the sexual revolution that involves:

- Education on sexuality for Church members
- Development of strong, loving, Christian homes
- Reaching out to, and the pastoral care of, the sexually and relationally broken
- Healing and counselling ministries that address sexuality.

Then as Jesus said, "The captives can be set free."
Luke 4:18

Having glanced at the overall picture, we will now look at some of the problems.

CHAPTER 1

Categories of Sexual Strugglers found in the Church

There are many areas of sexual disorder, some of which are mentioned in the Stream of Sexuality (see Page 35 for diagram). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of mental disorders fourth edition of the American Psychiatric Association in 1994 known as the DSM-IV, there are 18 different types of sexual disorder:

1. Heterosexual Promiscuity (sex before marriage).
2. Adultery.
3. Incest.
4. Rape.
5. Paedophilia (sex with minors).
6. Sadism.
7. Masochism (S & M means sado-masochism or violent sex)
8. Bestiality (sex with animals).

9. Transvestism (men who enjoy wearing women's underwear - usually in private).
10. Trans-sexualism - where a person has sex change.
11. Voyeurism (called peeping toms in the west, looking into people's bedrooms and bathrooms hoping to see people undressed).
12. Exhibitionism (men who expose their genitals to women).
13. Compulsive Masturbation.
14. Pornographic usage (of any kind).
15. Prostitution (male or female).
16. Coprophilia (sex using body waste).
17. Necrophilia (sex with dead people).
18. Fetishes (anything non-sexual, like clothing or shoes etc. that is used as, or causes sexual stimulation).

There are suggestions that shortly gender identity disorder will also be removed from the DSM IV. Telling people that a sexual disorder is wrong and not to do it has never really helped them and probably never will. What they want to know is how to overcome the problem! Can they change? Does God love them?

These 18 disorders can be sub-divided into five categories of strugglers, some of whom are coming into the Church. In fact most Churches will have someone with sexual identity or sexual behavioural problems:

1. Sexual perversions, i.e. unnatural sexual acts and sex with animals. Natural sex is between a man and a woman.
2. Emotional dependencies - are generally amongst women and are emotional rather than sexual relationships. The women get too close emotionally.

3. Sexual addictions, e.g. pornography, compulsive masturbation, having multiple sexual partners.
4. Sexual molestations, which includes rape, sexual abuse, and incest. Women are particularly affected. When an adult has sex with a child it is always abuse. The child is always a victim of adult lust.
5. Gender confusion and insecurity: people not knowing whether they should be male or female. The more confused the gender identity, the more likely a person will cross dress (i.e. a man dressing as a woman or woman dressing as a man), or even seek a sex change.

Even though there are many areas of broken sexuality, the Stream of Sexuality (Page 35) shows that by nature our true sexuality is heterosexuality, i.e. attraction to the opposite sex. However, even if a person gets involved in a deviation for a while, they can change to heterosexuality or live a fulfilled, celibate lifestyle. Change is possible. The Bible clearly says that we are meant to be attracted to the opposite sex. This is God's perfect plan (Gen 1:26-28). When God saw that Adam was alone (Genesis 2:18), He brought a woman, (not a man, or an object or an animal) Eve, to end this loneliness. (Genesis 2:23). However, this does not mean everyone has to be married to end his or her loneliness.

Many think that because you are born again or spirit-filled you will never have sexual struggles or temptations. This is simply not true. Remember we are both spirit and flesh; at times the flesh takes over. So we need to look at reasons why Christians struggle with sexuality.

CHAPTER 2

Reasons why Christians will have Sexual Struggles

Many Christians labour under wrong understandings and the expectation that because they are Christians they will never struggle with sexuality. They think “As a new person in Christ I should have no problems and I’m bad because I struggle, and have sexual fantasies, etc.” But who told us that we would never struggle with sexuality? Salvation hasn’t solved all of life’s problems - it is only the beginning of the journey to overcome problems. Here are six reasons why we will struggle:

1. ***We are fallen sinners*** (Romans 3:23) ***even though redeemed.***

These parallel truths need to be taught to our Churches, especially to our young people. All of us need to know we will struggle with sexuality. At any time, in any day, we can fall short of God's standard. We will have this weakness while we are alive, but we don't have to sin.

2. ***We live in a fallen World*** (Genesis 3:17-19). Nothing is perfect, everything is fallen and affected by sin such as:-

- Ecology - we have drought and earthquakes;
- Sociology - war, corruption, greed.
- Psychology - we are immature, selfish, insecure,
- Culturally - we have wrong values,
- Family - our needs are not completely met by parents who also did not have their needs met.

3. ***We have a Supernatural Predator - Satan*** (1 Peter 5:8).

He came into God's creation, tempted Adam and Eve to sin, and now all of humanity, including sexuality, is affected. You may say, "But Satan is defeated." Satan is only defeated where we establish Jesus as Lord – in daily decisions, not just at salvation or at an altar call. Jesus has to be established as Lord - over unmet needs,

our identity, our sexuality, relationships, and our bodies. If not, we are all open to Satan's attack.

Evil spirits can affect our lives and our sexuality especially if parents have offered children to gods and goddesses of sex. Spiritual deliverance in the Name of the Lord Jesus could then be necessary. Deliverance will not necessarily heal the psychological wounds that come from rejection, bitterness, abuse, labelling, lack of love etc. If we cut ourselves, that injury can get infected. Proper healing deals with the cut and the infection. For the sexual struggler, the injury can be rejection and the infection is being immoral, homosexual, etc. Both injury and infection have to be healed.

4. ***The biological drive for sex.***

In Genesis 1:28 God said to Adam and Eve "be fruitful and multiply". We can't get rid of this normal natural desire or cast it out. But God expects us to control it and gives us the strength to do so by His Holy Spirit.

5. ***The psychological need to be loved*** (Genesis 2:18).

"It is not good that man is alone." This is our biggest need. It is a normal part of us. For some, the problem that gets them into sexual sin is their need for love. Only one thing makes us feel loved and that is human relationships, not possessions or knowledge.

All of Christian theology is summed up in the two greatest commandments:

Love God - be in right relationship with God, and:

Love your neighbour - be in right relationship with each other.

No wonder in Luke 10:27 that Jesus told us to love God and our neighbour.

In the West, sexual problems have increased, in spite of education, material goods, and the best Bible teaching etc. Why? People cannot maintain a relationship, they live by feelings and their deepest needs for love are not met. Our children are not emotionally nourished. Often at puberty they will use sex as a substitute for the love and intimacy that parents should have given.

6. ***We make wrong choices.***

God does not take away our freedom to choose, but sometimes we wish He would. Adam and Eve made a wrong choice to eat the fruit even though God had told them not to (Genesis 3:1-6). Often we do the very thing we don't wish to do and don't do the things we wish to do. This is what Paul wrote about in Romans 5.

Our first line of defense is that we must admit we are sexual creatures who have weakness - and in spite of how strongly we are sexually tempted, we must choose to

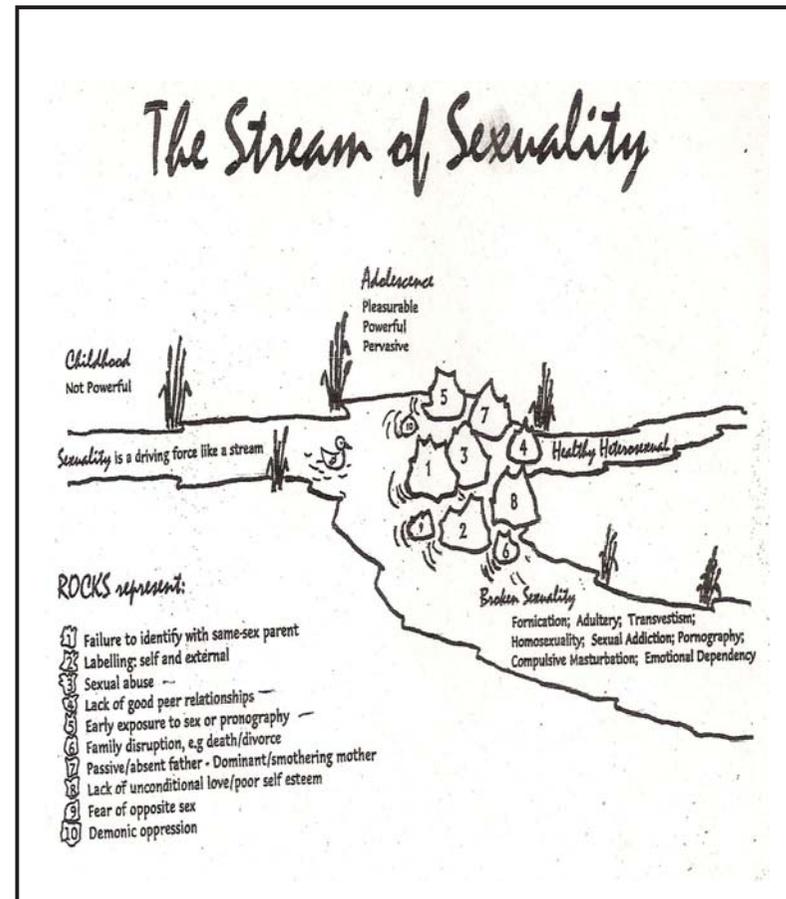
obey God. God asks us to obey in spite of how we feel. Obedience doesn't solve every problem of life, but it doesn't increase problems. It doesn't always remove the temptations, but will keep you safe in a world of risk. If we must struggle, let it be because we choose to obey, and not that we struggle with the consequences of disobedience. It will not be easy. Yet we need to tell our children and new converts that they can make right decisions about sexuality.

Remember: nobody can make you sin but you.

Next we come to look specifically at how certain problems can develop.

CHAPTER 3

The Stream of Sexuality



This diagram shows sexuality is like a stream where at:

Childhood: Sexuality is not a powerful force. The child is not really aware of gender differences until around 5 years.

Adolescence: Sexuality becomes pleasurable, powerful and can affect our whole life. There is a danger that sexuality can get out of control. At this point problems may emerge in life that hinder our progress to heterosexuality, which is an attraction to the opposite sex. Just as rocks in a stream can direct the waters from their true direction, so certain problems in life can divert the direction of one's true sexuality into wrong experiences.

The rocks can represent:

1. Failure to identify with same sex parent. This may be due to absence, sickness, or parental expectations - the son is sensitive, interested in art, music and father wants him to be in sports team, be athletic, etc. The son rejects the male model set before him. The girl is told that a good woman is an excellent cook, very pretty etc. She rejects this role of womanhood.
2. Labelling/name calling by others or yourself, e.g. "you are a hopeless man or woman", "you are a sissy" or "you are a tomboy."
3. Sexual abuse - for a girl this can cause fear of men, hatred of mother/or father for not protecting her, rejection of her own feminine role and the desire to look as unfeminine as possible. She might put on extra

weight to appear unattractive to men and feels that women are safer and desire relationships with them.

For a boy, he can be very confused about his sexual identity, feeling he is possibly homosexual, or inadequate as a male.

4. Lack of good peer relationships - not fitting in with the group or crowd of your own age. There is a sense of intense isolation and rejection. The quiet, sensitive person, may be good at the arts and music but is rejected by peers who like pop music, parties etc.
5. Early exposure to sex or pornography. A girl seeing her father engrossed in pornography can believe that women are only good for one thing - sex. Or a boy viewing it thinks women are only there for the sexual pleasure of men.
6. Family disruption, e.g. death or divorce.
7. Passive/absent father who does not or cannot fulfill his role. Therefore a woman can be dominant and smothering of her son - this is the classic background for the male homosexual.
8. Lack of unconditional love to the child from the parents who only love the child if he/she does well academically or performs well at sports, etc. This results in poor self-esteem for the child.

(6, 7 and 8 can result in what is known as Defensive Detachment. Here the child withdraws from the parent and looks for love with other adults of the same sex.)

9. Fear of opposite sex, having experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse from them.
10. Demonic oppression. There can be demonic oppression in our life, which damages our sexuality. In India we heard stories of young girls dedicated to Hindu deities on the night of the full moon and of girls given over to “sacred prostitution”. Of young men whose great grandparents were immoral and this influence still affects the young men. So without doubt spirits can oppress people in their sexuality. However, casting out a demonic spirit is only part of the answer to a problem. Deliverance does not answer that need for love and acceptance. So often they need emotional healing as well.

Healthy Heterosexuality: It would seem a miracle if any were to enter the stream of healthy heterosexuality, judging by the rocks and obstacles in the way, but most people do. Many people who come to the Church have suffered some of these traumatic events represented by the rocks, which lead them down the stream of brokenness. The good news is that even if people go down the wrong stream of sexuality, they can return back to the right stream.

Now it will be important to look specifically at some of these areas of brokenness.

CHAPTER 4

Key Factors in the Development of Homosexuality

No other issue across the Western world and Church is causing more confusion and division than homosexuality. It is estimated that between 2-4% of men and 0.5-1% of women are same-sex attracted. Being gay often refers to those who are quite happy to tell everyone that they are homosexual. For 25 years Frank Worthen was in the gay scene until an encounter with Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. It transformed his life so completely that he left the gay lifestyle. Now married, he and his wife minister to those wanting to come out of homosexuality. So he has much to say on what is homosexuality and is the author of several books.

WHAT IS HOMOSEXUALITY

By Frank Worthen,

New Hope Ministries, San Francisco, USA

“There is no agreement among the scientific community, religious groups or homosexual people themselves as to what is homosexuality. A good definition is: “One who is motivated, in adult life, by a definite preferential erotic attraction to members of the same sex and who usually, but not necessarily, engages in overt sexual relations with them.”

-*Changing Homosexuality in the Male*, (Hatterer, J)

First, are people born gay? Many people believe they were, as often they have felt a same-sex attraction since they were a child. This belief often supplies them with comfort, relieving them of any responsibility to change. However, there is no solid scientific evidence that people are born “gay”. The overwhelming majority of same sex attracted people are completely the same as heterosexuals genetically, hormonally and with same brain structures. They are fully male or female. Genes do not determine sexual behaviour or sexual preference.

Learned Behaviour: We believe homosexuality is learned behaviour which is influenced by a number of factors: a disrupted family life in early years, a lack of unconditional love on the part of either parent and a failure to identify with the same sex-parent. Later, these problems can result in a search for love and acceptance, envy of

the same or the opposite sex, a life controlled by various fears and feelings of isolation. One thing that does seem clear: homosexuality is brought about by many reasons - psychological, biological, environmental and spiritual. It is simplistic thinking to lay the blame on any single area.

Fears of the opposite sex, incest or molestation, dominant mothers and weak fathers, demonic oppression: all of these may play a part in causing homosexuality, but no individual factor alone can cause it. Along with outside factors in a person’s life, his own personal choices have played a key role in forming and shaping his homosexual identity, though few will admit this.

What does the Bible say? The Bible states clearly in five places that homosexual behaviour is sin: Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26,27; 1 Corinthians 6:9,10; 1 Timothy 1:9,10. Sexual lust and fantasy, both homosexual and heterosexual, are sinful according to God’s Word. On the other hand, 1 Corinthians 10:13 assures us that temptation is not sin: “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.” But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. Jesus Himself was tempted but did not sin.

There is a difference between experiencing a pull between homosexual acts or fantasy and choosing to give in to that pull. This is the difference between temptation and sin. We can’t fully control that which tempts us, but the choice of whether or not to pursue that which tempts

is within our power. This power of choice is strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

The Four Components of Homosexuality

By Frank Worthen,

New Hope Ministries, San Francisco, USA

The problem of homosexuality involves much more than simply a sexual act. Those caught up in this sin usually have entered the homosexual lifestyle to some degree. To better understand the circumstances of the homosexual person seeking help, we've divided homosexuality into four components: behaviour, psychic response, identity and lifestyle.

1. Behaviour

Often, it is assumed that all homosexual people engage in homosexual acts, but this is not always the case. Because of fears or strong religious convictions, they may refrain from sexual behaviour; yet experience an intense battle with homosexual attractions. Another wrong assumption is that all people who engage in homosexual acts are homosexual. There are huge numbers of heterosexual men who engage in homosexual acts for a variety of reasons, such as being in prison or where heterosexual sex is unattainable. In India, with so many young male students in same sex hostels, then homosexuality is seen as normal.

Also, we do not believe that a child who is involved in homosexual acts early in life will become homosexual unless these acts fulfil needs that are not being met in other ways, such as needs for love, acceptance, security and significance. In these cases, the child's involvement in the act is viewed as a trade-off for the non-sexual needs he is obtaining. It is possible that the act and the fulfilled needs could become synonymous, which could lead to the development of a homosexual orientation. However, statistics have shown most children who had experienced homosexual acts left these acts behind, growing up to lead a normal heterosexual life.

2. Psychic Response

A brief definition of this term is, "sexual excitation (stimulation) caused by visual perception or fantasy speculation." Psychic response is also what people refer to as a "homosexual orientation," or "homosexual attraction." Though many people claim that they have experienced visual or sexual attraction for the same sex for as long as they can remember," there is a developmental progression in a person's life that leads to a homosexual psychic response. In our counselling men have stated that they felt same sex attractions as young as the age of five.

A child may start out with a need to compare himself with others to see if he measures up to societal standards. When he feels he doesn't compare favourably with others,

he develops admiration for those traits and physical characteristics he feels he does not possess. Admiration, which is normal, may turn to envy. Envy leads to the desire to possess others and finally, to consume others. This strong desire becomes eroticised somewhere along the way, eventually leading to homosexual psychic response. As psychic response begins to grip someone's life, a certain amount of scheming takes place. Sexual situations are pictured in the mind. When the first sexual encounter takes place, it may be the result of several years of planning and fantasy. However, homosexual behaviour can precede psychic response, which may develop as a conditioned response to pleasant encounters with those of the same sex.

3. Identity

Some people enter into homosexuality through "identity." These are people who may not have experienced sexual attraction for the same sex or have had any homosexual encounters. However, from an early age, they have felt they were "different" from other people. They feel abnormal, like they do not fit into the heterosexual world. They reason, "If I'm not heterosexual, then I must be gay" and they accept the homosexual label onto their lives. Of course, this is a misinterpretation. A person troubled with shyness, fear of the opposite sex, lack of athletic or social skills need not accept the label "homosexual." However, people do not grow into labels. Once a label is accepted, the implied characteristics of that label begin to develop in a person's life. What we

believe about ourselves is of extreme importance. In fact studies show that the self-labelling "I am no good", "I am gay" is far more damaging than what others say of us.

4. Lifestyle

A homosexual may insist that he bears no responsibility for his identity, his psychic response or even his first sexual encounter, which may have been forced upon him. However, every homosexual person must bear the responsibility for his or her choice to enter the homosexual lifestyle. People enter this lifestyle to varying degrees. Some live in the heterosexual world for the most part, seeking out only sporadic, impersonal sexual encounters. Others immerse themselves in the total "gay sub-culture," a setting in which the person works, lives and socializes in a totally gay environment. In the West there is a highly visible, politically and economically powerful gay subculture. In Asia it is far less conspicuous but nevertheless is there. There are many varying lifestyles between these two extremes, but the gay subculture, for many people, is the first place where they have experienced any form of real acceptance. However, in spite of the acceptance, the homosexual lifestyle often proves to be a painful and unrewarding way of life, particularly for older gays who are no longer desirable sexually.

Dr Elizabeth R Moberley said in her book *Homosexuality a New Christian Ethic* that: "I suggest that the homosexual condition is to be linked not with genetic predisposition, hormonal imbalance or even abnormal learning processes as commonly understood but with

difficulties in the parent child relationship especially in the early years of life.” The problems are usually with the same-sex parent. The homosexuals need for same sex love is the need to make up for the love they have not received or believe they have not received from the same-sex parent.

Factors in the development of male homosexuality and lesbianism are very similar. Legitimate needs for security, love, and affirmation are met through bonding with the parent of same sex. If a girl cannot receive this from her mother she may look to other women to meet her needs. If a boy cannot receive this from his father he may look to other men to meet his needs.

This is what happened to Simon. Feeling very distant from his father he sought for male intimacy in homosexuality. Now read his story.

Knowing the Father’s Heart

by Simon Paul

My childhood experience of church was not good. Even though we were Christians our church members rejected us, as we were so poor. Yet in childhood I had experienced giving my life to Christ at age 3. Later, I remember going to Sunday school and church for many years.

It was at age of 8 that I was sexually abused by one of my cousins but it was not very badly. However, it left me

a bit confused about my sexual identity. I think it was after the abuse that I started developing attraction towards my same sex friends. Then as a teenager a terrible thing happened. One of my Church members, who was a pastor and prophet, to whom I had high respect, sexually abused me when he happened to stay one night at our home. I was too helpless to refuse and so he continued to abuse me for a couple of years. Worse was to follow when I got older when other older men including another cousin, also sexually abused me. One good memory of childhood, however, was being attracted to girls, but at the time I thought this was sin. So I ignored those feelings needs.

Things did not get better in my life because my father, who was an alcoholic, was emotionally distant from me. As well, he was often absent from home with his drinking, gambling and drug addictions. I missed a male role model very badly. I was so scared of my father since he tried to kill all of us a couple of times. Initially, my sister who was 10 years elder than me was my role model. After she got married at the age of 16 my mother became my role model so that I was totally dependent on her for everything. In return she was a caring but over protective mother.

Perhaps it was because I had an emotionally and physically absent father that even before my adolescence I began to be sexually attracted to other men. The truth was, I was really craving for the emotional and physical closeness which I was not receiving from my father. I was so young and did not exactly understand what was happening to me. In spite of my struggles, I was the youth leader in my

church. I continued going to church though I was very confused spiritually. My church was quite conservative in its belief so I had a wrong understanding of God, believing that He was very angry and wanted to punish people. More over since I was not able to relate with my father I could not relate to God as my Heavenly Father. In spite of my same sex attractions at the age of 17, I had a girl friend from my church but my family and church opposed our relationship very strongly. My mother even threatened to kill me if I do not quit the relationship with the girl. Finally I quit our relationship but it then caused me to sexually involved with a couple of young men from my church.

Things changed again for the worse, as my cousin introduced me to other gays in the cities in Kerala. I started to feel that I was not alone with these strange sexual feelings. In spite of all these problems I always realised God's calling on my life to be in the ministry but, because of my bad experiences with the church and the pastor, I never ever wanted to become a pastor. Finally I enrolled with a Bible college in Chennai and at the same time was introduced to the big gay scene in the city, (the gay network). I again felt a feeling of self-worth and value, as I was sexually wanted very much by the gays.

In 1995 I tried to get help from Exodus International North America as they sponsored me to do the "Recovery programme" in the USA .Yet I never got to the programme as my visa got rejected. However, the encouragement and the wonderful articles and testimonies, which were sent over to me by Frank Worthen and Exodus, had been helping me

to believe that the "change" is ultimately possible. Things began to change a little in 1996 when at the age of 25, I went to a Discipleship Training School but I was still getting involved sexually with other men. The DTS helped me to start forgiving my father and others who abused me sexually and also to take responsibility for my own wrong choices in life.

In 1998 I felt homosexuality was too hard to overcome so I wanted to embrace it as my true identity. Yet I was never really happy or fulfilled having sex with men. After all I was a Christian and I never forgot Jesus died for my sins.

Yet God never gave up on me and in AD 2000 began to intervene supernaturally in my life. When I told some people about my homosexuality I realised that they actually cared enough to help me to change. I was amazed! Even though I went for counselling and prayer there was no immediate change with my same sex behaviour. In fact, when I went for counselling with a woman she put no pressure on me to change. She was happy to listen to all my pain and confusion and this really helped me. Then I found a church that was very different in its approach to sexual strugglers. While they did not approve of my behaviour, they understood my struggles and gave me time to change. There was no hurry.

Finally, I realized that I couldn't overcome my struggles with my own strength, that I needed His grace. I surrendered all my own efforts to change myself to God and accepted His sovereign power to take over me. Then I

began to see His Grace pouring out on me each time I was faced with same sex attractions and temptations.

Slowly I began to forgive my father for his abuse of the family. Then a former male lover tempted me again to go and have sex with him, but I said “No!” This was the start of me making correct choices; Godly choices. It was not easy being celibate after so many years of having sex with men. Yet God was slowly changing my homosexual feelings, attractions, identity and behaviour.

Over the years I have had more spiritual lows than highs but I trust God to change this. I see Him as God the Father, as I have experienced His Father’s heart. As well, I have been able to help others who have been through the same struggles as I have been. If Jesus can help me He can help them. Now I see myself as a man.

One of the books that helped me to restore my relationship with God the Father was “The Father Heart of God” by Floyd McClung. My father died recently, but I was able to show that I love him and have forgiven him before he died. Wonderfully I saw him changing slowly to become gentler. Praise God, he can change us when we look to Him.

Simon

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CHAPTER 5

Women’s Issues

Lesbianism

DEFINITION: This is a relationship addiction between women that can be both emotional and sexual. (Female same-sex relationships are forbidden in Romans 1:26, the only reference in Scripture). Now we will look at lesbianism, which refers to female homosexuals. It is estimated worldwide around 0.5 - 1% of women are lesbians, named after the island of “lesbos” near Greece. Here the poetess, Sapho in the 7th Century BC nurtured her women students and wrote poems of love and adoration to them.

In Asia, women who suffer ill treatment from men are particularly vulnerable to lesbianism as here they can receive love, security, friendship and gentleness. Often in Asia where the sexes are segregated for worship, social events or women's only compartments on trains, lesbianism can develop (or over-dependent female to female relationships - more of this in another chapter).

"Think of the ladies compartments of trains, you see women there together all the time and from their faces you know that it is bliss" i.e. "she is us" (Ref: *New Internationalist October 2000*).

Three categories of lesbian women are those who:

1. Have sexual and emotional relationships with other women.
2. Those who don't have a sexual relationship with another woman but an intense emotional relationship.
3. Only fantasize sexually about women, as they are too frightened to have a relationship.

Five Major Causes of Lesbianism mentioned in *Out of Egypt* by Jeanette Howard.

1. The Mother/Daughter Relationship

The legitimate needs for security, love, and affirmation are met through bonding with the parent of the same sex. If a girl cannot receive this from her mother she may look to other women to meet her needs.

Types of problem Mothers:

- i. The "doormat" mother - she allows people to treat her badly.
- ii. The domineering, dogmatic mother.
- iii. The scheming and critical manipulator.
- iv. The insecure woman and mother.

2. The Father/Daughter Relationship

The father's main role is to affirm his daughter in her femininity. If she has a bad relationship with her father it is possible that:

- i. She can also hate other men and mistrust God.
- ii. She builds her own identity and becomes independent and controlling.
- iii. She plays out a victim role in life to gain pity, care, love and attention.

3. Dysfunctional Family

This is due to many things such as how parents relate to each other and to the child, whether there has been abuse of alcohol in family, or taboo subjects that have never been discussed such as sexuality?

4. Peer Influence

She has an increasing sense of being different to her peers - they talk of boys but she is not interested, not

fitting in to the “girl talk.” Or they call her “tomboy” because she is good at sports or prefers male activities.

Like 23 year old Jenny from Malaysia. For as long as she can remember she liked male activities, male company. Labelled “tomboy” by her friends, it is no wonder she drifted into the gay scene. She remembers breaking off “straight” friendships at University to seek out girls with similar interests. She later met them in the feminist groups where there were also lesbians from the gay scene.

5. Traumatic Events

This can involve Sexual Abuse such as incest, molestation, and rape. Many lesbians are victims of sexual abuse. There is also emotional or verbal abuse, or the death of or separation from a parent.

These will affect her as:

- i. She might be in denial of how badly traumatic events have effected her.
- ii. Distrust of others, particularly men, she emotionally detaches and could make inner vows that she hates men.
- iii. Out of anger she might want to control others feeling insecure, or she might be angry with her mother, or generally have unexplained anger.
- iv. She might develop obsessive, compulsive behaviours.

Healing is needed in all five areas.

1 & 2. *Mother and daughter and/or father and daughter relationship.*

If there is a problem she will have to work at it and healing can take time, especially if she has to face her anger, give and receive forgiveness and grieve over feeling unloved.

3. *Dysfunctional family*

She will have to learn to talk, trust, feel and relate. A loving Church with good, caring relationships is most helpful.

4. *Peer Influence*

She will need to develop healthy ways of relating to same sex friends. Her need for same-sex intimacy will be met as they love and accept her for whom she is.

5. *Traumatic Events*

It is important to find a group or Counsellor to share their problems with and get healing and counselling. If possible, she will have to deal with the past, e.g. talk to those who abused her. It is important she remembers she is not alone and healing will take some time.

Can lesbians change? Here is a testimony of someone who did.

My Journey Out of Egypt

My name is Susan, I'm 47, single and was born and am still living, in the Cameron Highlands, Malaysia. I come from a typical Chinese family where dad leaves the

responsibility of taking care of the family to mother. Being the eldest of four children, I had to shoulder lots of responsibility too. I remembered how my mother told me her struggles and problems. During my childhood, dad spent a lot of his afternoons with us, but when his business failed due to gambling, things changed in the family.

So mum and dad had to work hard and finance was always the issue that caused arguments between them. My other sisters and brother just had to put up with them. But it got worse. When I was 13, dad chased mom and all us out of the house. It was that awful experience that badly affected my love for my dad. For many years I could not forgive him and I was angry with him. We felt abandoned as a family and at the same time angry at his irresponsible action.

Later he managed to persuade my mom to go back. Yet nothing changed. So again my mom confided in me all her problems. I was pushed into the role of a surrogate husband to her. She should have been going to him for help and emotional support, not me. As a young girl I needed her love and warmth. So from an early age, I became tough and strong. Yet deep within I was very soft and crying out for affection from my parents, especially from my father. I felt distanced from men. Then I began to find it easier to share and talk to females rather than males. When I was 11-12 years old, I began to be attracted to girls. At that time I did not think that this was wrong. Later in my teens, I began to be drawn to girls and fantasize over them. I guess

it was because of the hunger for affection and love from my mother that I turned to other females for comfort.

I had a few crushes on males during my teens but each rejection had affected my esteem. I hated myself because I was not attractive enough to these men. I did not like what I saw in the mirror. I began to like those that were physically attractive. But deep within I was crying for affirmation of who I was. Each time I had this attraction to girls, I just pushed it off with a few quick prayers but not realising the damage done in my subconscious. The best thing about my teenage years was accepting Christ as my Saviour at 16. At least I could talk to Him!

After my 'A' levels, I pursued my education and became an educator. After my education I was posted to a place away from home and I had to live on my own. Being a very active person, I thought I had a lot of friends but the truth was, I was very lonely deep inside. I did not fill the emptiness in me with Jesus. My relationship with Jesus was not based on love, but on what I was doing for Him. I was not focused on my being a real woman. It was around age 25 that I first fell into sexual sin. Someone challenged my courage to act out my lesbian feelings. So I had my first relationship and I began to live a double lifestyle. I went to Church on Sunday but had my lover in the week. There were many times that I repented and tried to walk out of the lifestyle but each time I only got more deeply involved in other relationships. However, the problem was these were all temporary relationships that provided only brief happiness. So over 10 years I had 4 lesbian relationships.

Yet I was very tired of living behind a “Christian mask”, pretending to be a “good Christian” as well as living in the closet and hiding my lesbianism.

My final relationship at age 33 was also with a “born again” Christian sister. One day she made a decision to leave me and I was devastated. My whole life was shattered and I had to finally accept my life was a mess. I cried out to God for help and forgiveness. It was only the grace and love of God that helped me to be restored into a whole new relationship with Him. I thank God that I chose to leave lesbianism behind and follow Him. So over three years I went for professional and Christian help both locally and abroad.

It was a long slow process and not easy. Yet it was through the counselling and a support group that I began a journey to freedom, spiritually, emotionally and as a woman. All my life, and especially in my lesbian relationships, it was like being a slave in Egypt. If you read the book of Exodus in the Bible you know that in Egypt God’s people were slaves.

I thank God for bringing godly Christians along my path to show me affection, comfort and acceptance. During this time, I experienced the healing power of Jesus and His overwhelming love. My relationship with my parents has also improved which is a great joy. It has not been an easy path but it has been a victorious journey. My relationship with Jesus gets deeper and closer each day, as I know my life has been a gift from Him. I once was blind but now I see, I once was bound; now I’m free because of His grace.

In spite of all the pain and failure I have experienced, I know He has a plan for my life. All glory to Him for His faithfulness and mercy in my life.

Susan.

Emotional Dependency

DEFINITION: The condition resulting “when the ongoing presence and nurturing of another is believed to be necessary for personal security.” The relationship is one of excessive closeness and generally does not involve others. Sex is not usually a vital part of the relationship. Too much time is spent alone with the other person or engaging in phone calls with them, etc.

Who is vulnerable to emotional dependency? Virtually anyone is, but primarily women. However, there are usually two distinct personality types - one appears to be strong, competent and wise; the other more unsure, emotionally needy and less together.

As well as being emotionally dependent, people can also be co-dependent, i.e. a woman needs to rescue a man so she marries an abusive alcoholic who needs to be in control of his relationships. Thus since they both need each other, this keeps the unhappy relationship going!

Whatever the dependency, it is sinful and it is idolatrous as the person is controlled by passions, vulnerable to hatred, jealousy, rage, seeking their own good, and making human relationships more important

than a relationship with God. We must be dependent on God.

The origins of emotional dependency are similar to those of lesbianism.

- Real or perceived rejection from others
- Unfilled need for love and approval from members of same sex.
- Need to be in control in same-sex relationships.
- Rejection of feminine role and gender.
- Failure or unwillingness to accept maturity/adulthood.
- Mistrust - to accept what God has planned for life.
- Loneliness, low self-esteem that leads to insecurity.
- Anger, bitterness, frustration or disillusionment with opposite-sex relationships.
- Rebellion - not willing to surrender areas of life to God.

As we read Jane's story we see the healing of emotional dependency is very similar to that of lesbianism.

My own woman at last

Jane 39 from Sydney, Australia knows how her dependencies on other women have always spoilt their friendship. Her dependencies on women started as a result of a distant relationship with her own mother when she was very young, leaving her insecure and looking for a

mother figure. So all through her life Jane was always drawn to the caring mother-type, the woman who would listen to her, spend time with her, whether it was her school teacher, office worker or another woman at Church. The relationships would go wrong –Jane expecting the women to give her as much time as she wanted with them. The women would feel threatened and pull away. Jane would feel rejected, get depressed and turn to over-eating, smoking or drinking. She was also angry with God and herself for again spoiling a relationship. So she had not only relational dependencies but also the addictions that she developed to deal with her emotional pain.

When Jane came to Christ at age 24 she then slowly began to address some of her deep problems of dependencies and addictions. She joined a support group and went for counselling and prayer. It took several years to overcome smoking and drinking before she began to address the major issue, the deep rejections she had felt by her mother. Talking, prayer, counselling and friendships with women were most healing.

Later as she was able to forgive her mother, she found she was able to love her. Then as she in turn felt loved by her mother, she also experienced more security in herself. To her surprise, dependencies on other women began to weaken. She realized she was no longer getting into relationships to meet her own needs, but rather just to be a friend, for companionship and even to help other people!

It has been at times a painful journey as she recognizes that she is vulnerable to this problem. She is

now her own person, secure in whom she is in God and loves her mother.

Maybe even marriage is a possibility.

Steps to Breaking Bondage to Dependency

1. Confess it as sin.
2. Recognize God's position - that He must be central to our existence, not another person.
3. Develop true intimacy with others of the same sex, rather than only one special friend.

Then go on to the Recovery Process.

- ❖ Consider asking anyone who has been hurt by the dependency for forgiveness (if they don't know you were dependent on them then don't confess it to them).
- ❖ Look at origins of the problems.
- ❖ Take steps to reduce temptation.
- ❖ Don't spend too much time alone with the person you are dependent on. Invite others into the friendship.
- ❖ Let the relationship with God be the most important relationship.
- ❖ Co-operate with the Holy Spirit in the healing process.

Sexual Abuse

What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse is any contact or interaction (visual, verbal, or psychological) between a child/adolescent and an adult when the child/adolescent is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or any other person (*Pg. 30 The Wounded Heart, by Dr Dan Allender*).

There are two broad categories of abuse:

1. *Sexual Contact*

- ✓ An adult asking a child to undress, to be looked at or fondled.
- ✓ An adult touching a child's genitals.
- ✓ An adult having a child touch his/her genitals.
- ✓ Oral-genital contact.
- ✓ Forced masturbation.
- ✓ Digital (finger) penetration, or penetration of the anus or vagina with an object.
- ✓ Anal penetration/intercourse.

2. *Sexual Interactions*

Sexual interactions or suggestions are harder to acknowledge because they do not involve physical touch and do not seem so severe. They can be very subtle, but are equally damaging.

- Verbal - seductive talk, sexual talk or suggestions asking questions “do you like this when I touch you?”
- Visual - exposure to or use of pornography.
- Psychological - subtle communication that erodes appropriate role boundaries. “This is our secret, don’t tell anyone, this is what adults do,” etc.

Who are the abusers?

Incest is either:

- Interfamilial child sexual abuse by family members such as fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, cousins. Mothers rarely sexually abuse their children. Sadly, in some Asian cultures whole families of males abuse the younger girls or young bride.
- Extra-familial abuse by non-family members such as surrogate parent figures, neighbours, boyfriends, teachers etc.

Incest is usually more devastating than extra-familial abuse, because the protection and nurturing of the parental bond is broken and there is no safe place in the home for the healing process to begin. Moreover, it is very hard for the young girl to tell her mother what her father did to her. Who will believe her? Memories of the trauma need to be faced, gently and at the right time.

This will:

1. Remove denial e.g. “this abuse did not happen”. Denial means choosing to live a lie. It assumes that God is too weak to help me face my painful past.

2. Reclaim “self”. We are today, because of what our past has been. If we refuse to accept some of our past, then we cannot fully embrace and accept ourselves and press on with courage for the future.

3. Facilitate move towards real change: To accept our past means that we will not be caught by surprise – nothing will be hidden that will shame us unexpectedly. We will know better what we are dealing with so that we can have control over our journey of change.

How is this done?

- Be open to help - but not demanding of your helpers.
- Be curious about what happened and why - but not frantic to know every detail.
- Be vigilant about avoiding abuse - but not obsessed that you are in permanent danger.

DENIAL: This is refusing to face the truth about what has happened to us. There are three areas of denial.

- i. Denial of the past - blocking of memories.
- ii. Denial of the present - secondary symptoms; covering and hiding feelings.
- iii. Denial of the future - Why did God let it happen? This can lead to loss of trust in God.

Jesus has promised “the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32). In accepting what has happened, we are free to be angry at the injustice that has occurred to us and to cry

out to God to help us, heal us, comfort and nurture us - to give us life.

Effects of Abuse:

1. Physical Problems

Immediate signs can be: Feeding/sleeping disturbances; bed-wetting; gynaecological problems; genital injuries; venereal and STD infections; pregnancy and abortion.

Lingering problems: Abnormal periods, obesity, migraines, stomach and skin problems, disabling aches and pains.

2. Emotional Problems

Guilt, shame, lack of self-worth, anger and hatred, depression; fear and anxiety; being a “mask-wearer” and pretending everything is fine when it is not; being unable to receive love; Obsessive guilt over what had happened by blaming herself.

3. Behavioural Problems

These can be running away, prostitution, drugs, drinking, promiscuity and rebelliousness.

4. Relationship Problems

i. Marriage problems

- Unable to trust a man in intimate relationships.
- Ambivalent feelings about sex, and sexual dysfunction.

- Need for control
- Flashbacks of painful memories; hostility towards men.
- Fear of rejection
- Poor partner choice.

ii. Lesbianism can develop

iii. Parenting: parents repeat the abusive patterns by abusing their own children, or being overly protective of their own children fearing the child will be abused.

5. Spiritual problems

There can be the loss of trust; inability to grow as a Christian; The girl feels God hates her and she is undeserving of His love. When fathers have caused the abuse, these problems can be even greater. In India *The Hindustan Times* 13 June 1999 carried a very disturbing article titled “Incest is epidemic in middle class.”

No doubt it referred to many young girls like Bridget, a victim of sexual abuse and incest. Her story reveals the devastation that sexual abuse and incest caused for the victim and the family.

Like many Christian families across Asia, Bridget living in Manila, Philippines, and her family were affected by poverty. She was the firstborn and there were two younger brothers. There was never enough money to feed the family, educate and clothe them. Her father was a self-employed businessman, and an atheist, while her

mother, a committed Catholic, worked in a hotel kitchen. It was her mother who took the three children to church while each Sunday Dad went to drink with his friends.

So when her mother got the opportunity to leave Manila and work in the Gulf States for 3 years and earn more money than she had dreamt of, it seemed an answer to prayers. At last they could have enough money to live. You see, they were also committed Catholics, though the father was an atheist.

Rosa, Bridget's mother, would miss the family but felt the sacrifice was worth it. She could return every three years to see the family. It would also mean that 10-year old Bridget would have to be a mother to her younger brothers. Bridget missed her mother terribly. There seemed to be no apparent problems in the family even though her mother was away.

However, one day Fernando, a committed catholic teacher who also taught Bridget, now a 13-year old student of his, noticed that she had suddenly become quiet, withdrawn and was often distressed. It was not surprising that her school work was poor. He became concerned enough to ask her what the problem was. He was shocked to discover that her father had been sexually abusing her since she was 10, which was the time her mother, Rosa had gone overseas. Naturally this caused Bridget great emotional turmoil, affecting her study, as well as her relationship with God and other men.

Fortunately, Rosa returned a month later on her annual leave.

Fernando got Bridget and Rosa to discuss the sexual abuse. Tragically, Rosa realised that the abuse had started for Bridget when she had gone away to work in the Gulf leaving Bridget and the other children alone with their father. Bridget, her mother and Fernando formed an action plan to see that father was never alone with Bridget. It has worked, the sexual abuse has now stopped but the damage to Bridget has been done. Part of the plan also meant the mother could not return to the Gulf. Her mother has found another job.

There have been some good results. Bridget is a lot happier, safer and her schoolwork has improved. Rosa never confronted her husband being too frightened of his drink-induced temper. In spite of all this, Bridget has maintained her faith and is still a regular attendee at mass. There is every hope that the God of healing will restore this young girl to wholeness. Thankfully, she still has her teacher as a friend and confidant, her loving supporting mother and her faith in Christ.

CHAPTER 6

Addictions

When *Time magazine*, May 1997 carried an article on “Sexual Addiction” we became aware of a new type of sexual problem that affected young men across the world. I met one of these young men in Bangalore, India.

Rajiv, 27 was single, and a final year Theological student at an Indian seminary. He was hooked on pornography, wasting hours surfing the net when he should be studying, as well as squandering his parents’ money. He is so sexually aroused that he masturbates five times daily. He has been addicted to pornography and masturbation since age 13.

Rajiv told me his sad story after I gave a lecture on sexual addiction at his college. When I suggested he tell a resident lecturer he refused, believing he would be thrown out of seminary. So I asked if he could try to get help from other students in his class. "I can't," he said. "I believe five of them have similar problems with Internet pornography."

My solution was to maintain email counselling for Rajiv, as he has no one with whom he can confide. It is a very difficult road ahead for him to overcome this problem if he is alone. Now he is an assistant Pastor and still struggling.

First, some definitions. An addiction is: "The state of compulsion, obsession or preoccupation that enslaves a person's will and desire." A compulsive habitual behaviour is something we can't stop - though we think we can; or something we can stop briefly - only to resume later.

What is Sexual Addiction?

It is a persistent (or at least an habitual) preoccupation with a sexual fantasy, behaviour or person with whom one is infatuated, which often culminates in orgasm. That means it involves our behaviour and emotional responses which are often covered over by skilled deceptions so that no one knows our problem.

When it comes to sexual addiction, the one thing we ALL need to reckon with is that we are vulnerable to becoming attached to those things that make us feel better, more secure, loved, protected, and fulfilled. We become addicted to the things that give us a sense of self-worth, and that help us to cope with difficulties in our lives. Therefore all of us are prone to addictions of one type or another. The same psychological and neurological processes that are involved in the making of an alcoholic or drug addict are responsible for addictions to work, stress, fantasies, dependent relationships, food, TV, cleanliness, sports, exercise, one's appearance, and daily routines. You name it! Apparently there are 182 addictions (for more on this, see *The Star*, Kuala Lumpur, 28 August 2003).

A common saying is: We are creatures of habit! So when it comes to most types of addictions, we need to understand:

- If I do something that makes me feel good, I will probably do it again.
- If I repeat it, and it keeps on making me feel good, I will probably make a habit of it.
- Once a habit, it becomes most important to me.
- I will miss it; perhaps go through withdrawals, if it is taken away. So, I have become attached to it.

Attachment to something or someone can indicate addiction may be present.

To understand and to have compassion on what a sexual addict is going through, we can begin to enter into his or her own struggle by relating to our own capacity to sin in this way. We all have something to learn from the healing of the sexual addict.

Our Tendency towards Addiction

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Often we become attached or addicted to people, possessions, or forms of power. It is those things that begin to distract us; they can also displace or fill in the places in our hearts where we all experience deep longings to not be alone, to know and be known by God and others, to love and to be loved. Our addictions fill in that void where only God can satisfy us. Instead of focussing on Him, we try to meet our needs in our own way. We can call addiction idolatry because these things can become ‘gods’ for us. Many times we look to our idols to meet our needs. They may provide for us security, value, self-worth, a sense of being loved, and a way of easing our burdens or of escaping from them.

In confronting our capacity for addiction the question is: Do these things free you to love God, yourself and your neighbour more freely? Or do they hinder you? Am I an addict?

Just about anything in life can become an object of attachment leading to addiction. True addictions are compulsive, habitual behaviours that interfere with our walk with God; addictions bind us rather than free us.

They often promise a false sense of security or fulfilment. They will always, in different degrees of intensity, be characterised by tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, loss of will power and distortion (distraction) of attention.

Sexual Addiction

Someone once described sexual addiction as the athlete's foot (a skin irritation between the toes) of the mind: “It never goes away, it is always asking to be scratched, promising relief. To scratch however, is to cause pain and to intensify the itch.”

Sexually addictive behaviour is a sin against one's own soul. As Saint Paul said in I Corinthians 6:18 -20, when we sin sexually we sin against our own bodies.

“Therefore flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside the body. But he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body.” Often people who struggle with a sexual addiction feel trapped, desiring to stop yet unable. Some can go for weeks, months even years presumably free, until something triggers the addiction again; stress, free time, changes in life, a time of year, a place, an old song. The addiction itself attacks the will and the self-esteem.

Addiction splits the heart in two. People who are sexually addicted often tell you they feel like two different

people “Dr Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde” (The book *Dr Jeckyl and Mr Hyde* showed we had two parts of our nature, the inner sinful part was Dr Jeckyl and the outer respectable was Mr Hyde). One part of them really desires to obey the Lord, to honour their marriage or their singleness, the other part desires only to continue the addictive behaviour. In the midst of a sexual addiction we can identify with St Paul when he writes in Romans 7:19-25: “For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing. What a wretched man I am, who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks are to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:24,25a)

Levels of Sexual Addiction

There are four levels of addiction. These help to categorize and give understanding to the scope of someone’s addiction. All levels are destructive and binding to one’s soul.

1. Compulsive masturbation, fantasy life, lust of heart, habitual masturbation in marriage. (Although fantasy and lust are at level one, often these thoughts and memories are the most difficult to be free from).
2. Use of pornography (usually accompanied by masturbation), telephone sex, soft pornography, explicit sexual books.
3. Sexual encounters with consenting adults, anonymous sexual encounters, prostitutes, frequenting adult bookstores, strip shows.

These levels intermix easily and will often progress into the fourth level of activities if continued unchecked.

4. Things that involve others unknowingly or against their will. These include; indecent telephone calls or behaviour, exhibitionism, voyeurism, child molestation, rape and incest. Here the person is breaking the law of the land.

Recovery

Jesus is the only one who can truly deliver us from this body of sin and death. This recognition is the beginning of recovery. Anyone, whether struggling with a sexual addiction or any kind of an addiction, can make resolutions to stop, fight it, avoid it and replace it with something “positive.” But this is not freedom. Freedom inevitably comes to us as a grace. Grace is not earned, manipulated, or seduced from God. It is just given. We can pray for it, seek it, receive it and desire it.

We can either fight this monster within by hating ourselves for it, or can begin to view this broken, hurting area in our lives as a place that desperately needs God’s presence to enter into it. This comes with humility, quietness and the practice of the presence of God. To listen, as author Leanne Payne has said in *The Broken Image*, is to obey. This is no easy thing. True love is a difficult choice. We are painfully turned away from lesser loves (idols) to the true God, Jesus Christ.

The Road To Freedom

Personal willingness and honesty is a first step. Do you want to be free? Is it more important to appear free or to be free?

Learning to trust others: we must not have the false attitude: “I can handle this alone!” So the next step is to bring trusted others into the light of what is really happening in your life. One must find those people who accept and love you, regardless of your addiction.

Confession and repentance: Break the secret of your struggle through the ongoing accountability to others. The presence of informed others helps to break all the rationalisations that the addict has come to use to keep the addiction alive. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in *Life Together*, “A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother (or sister) knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. As long as I am by myself in the confession of my sins, everything remains in the dark, but in the presence of a brother, the sin has to be brought into the light.”

Reclaiming the will: The addict must reclaim his or her God-given will. This is the ability to make choices for good or evil. No matter how weak, the will is always there.

A word on “deliverance prayer”. We do not deny the forces of the demonic that are possibly involved in sexual addiction. However, deliverance prayer (the naming

and casting out of demons) does not take away personal responsibility, that is, exercising one’s own will to make choices for good or evil. Nor does it take away the capacity to be addicted again. What can happen is exemplified by Jesus’ words (Luke 11:24-26, Matthew 12:43-4) that refer to evil spirits returning again to a house once swept clean, with the last condition turning out to be worse than the first.

Facing the truth within: As the addictive habits and patterns begin to break down, many of the root issues begin to surface. What are needful here are times of quiet, listening prayer, accountability, pastoral care, counselling, and support groups. We must reclaim our own heart, not displace what is in it with distractions.

Learning to give and receive non-erotic love: As the addict learns to walk in his or her new self, they learn to evaluate in non-sexual ways, and to understand that intimacy does not equal sex. You don’t have to have sex just because you are attracted to someone.

Ongoing grace and accountability, support groups and therapy: Most sexual addicts will need an ongoing support group to confess sin, share struggles and temptations, and receive encouragement. Avoid going through it alone.

Special considerations for married couples. The spouse (husband or wife) is also affected by the sin of their partner. A hurting spouse cannot just be concerned about the addiction of their partner. The hurting spouse

needs personal support as well. Trust has been violated and both spouses need different kinds of support. A spouse should not be the primary or only source of accountability for the addict. They both need good boundaries here.

References

Addiction and Grace, pg 56 (paraphrased)

Out of the Shadows Introduction pg vii

Recommended books:

Out of the Shadows by Patrick Carnes

Contrary to love by Patrick Carnes

Addiction and Grace by Gerald May M.D.

The Appendix of this book also has some practical help for the sexual struggler.

Jonathan, a former sexual addict, told us his story after a seminar in India.

I was born in 1950, first son of my parents who were living in a large city in South India. Naturally there was great excitement when I was born. Both my parents were Christians so I was raised as a Christian and attended Church and Sunday school. Both my Grandparents were "Ministers" of the Word. It was a wonderful Christian upbringing, so from early childhood I knew the scriptures well and wanted to know the meaning of life.

Yet there was a major problem. My father was a domineering person who caused a lot of hardship both to my mother, and my younger brothers and sisters. He was especially hard on me as the eldest son as he expected me to be perfect.

Then at age 5, came the end of both my problems and my happiness. I was sent to a relative's house to study far away in a Public school in Delhi. So as a child I did not experience the love of my parents, which is so vital for security. I remember seeing my parents every few years during school holidays, but they had no great influence on my early life.

Later in my teens they moved to Delhi and I lived with them again. Yet we were never really emotionally close. However, they were still Christians and prayed for me regularly. By the time I grew up into my teens, I had been homosexually abused several times by older men. I felt filthy inside and used sexually. At the age of 13, I started to masturbate after accidentally reading an adult sex book. Sadly, I developed an addiction to masturbation, which I did several times a day with fantasies from seeing pornographic books and pictures. I was left physically drained, feeling very guilty and with poor self-esteem.

I was committed to doing evil, as sex was the most compelling force in my world. The more I got involved with it, the more frustrated I became (like chasing a mirage). I thought Jesus was a killjoy and He did not want me to enjoy life. I lacked confidence and avoided eye contact with girls so this led me into voyeurism. So the next problem was that

at age 20, I started going to “red-light” areas and experimenting with prostitutes. This became a terrible addiction. After several sexual experiences with prostitutes I was left with chronic gonorrhoea. However, no one knew as I treated myself with massive doses of penicillin.

Amidst this sin, God was still trying to reach me. Amazingly at age 23, I became a Christian. My parents were overjoyed. Yet my secret, sinful life continued. How could I tell them or anyone else? I left Delhi hoping to make a new start in Lucknow with a new job. It didn't work. When I was about 28, I got into an adulterous relationship with a female relative which I knew was wrong. It seemed that the Lord allowed a legion of demons to take over my mind and I was tormented for months and years. Then I lost my job, so I was in a city, away from home, with no job, no money and no friends.

Life was hell and for seven years I resisted God's love. In desperation I went to magicians, hypnotherapists and psychiatrists to find relief but they did not understand what I was going through. A psychiatrist told me I had a total psychosis of the mind and needed to stay in an Institution for the rest of my life. He allowed me to undergo Electro Convulsion Therapy (shock treatment).

This only complicated matters. Later I was lucky to get another job. Then while on an official trip as my job involved travelling, I got off the bus. I climbed onto a railway bridge and jumped down about 40 feet, to a dry stream

below. I fell on my left heel and broke my ankle. It was as if Satan was trying to destroy me.

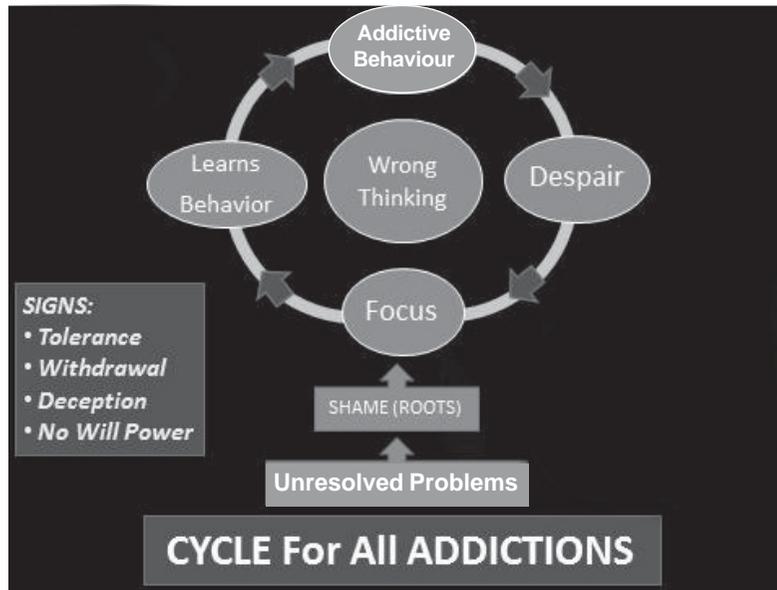
Finally, after seven years of resisting God I cried out to the Lord Jesus to give me just one more chance and for Him to heal my mind and save my life. If He would do this I promised I would obey Him and turn from all my wicked ways. The Lord Jesus heard my cry. Slowly but surely the healing, spread over many years, came. I felt the presence of evil leaving me as I kept following the Lord Jesus closely and reading the Bible daily. I started to go back to Church.

Jesus changed my life as He pulled me out of a horrible pit, and put my feet upon a rock. He gave me a new song. As He changed my attitudes and my immoral sexual behaviour, I was able to get a job. Then I got married at 35 to a wonderful person and we have a lovely daughter and a son who are in their teens! Now, I have everything the world calls a success - a home, a car and respect in society where I had been an outcast earlier. Yet it is only Jesus Who met the deepest longings of my soul.

I now work in a social organization that provides counselling to people. I can give insights from all the mistakes of my past life to bring meaning, joy and transformation in their lives. God uses everything for good.

Now, I know that true pleasure can only be found in Jesus as in Psalms 16:11 it says, “In His presence there is fullness of Joy and on His right hand are pleasures for evermore.” Do you believe this? Find out for yourself!

Jonathan.



We will use Jonathan’s testimony to explain the circle of addiction.

Unresolved Problems: refers to the fact that he did not experience the love of his parents and was sent to school in Delhi.

Shame: that sense that you personally are not good or you are inadequate. Jonathan’s father expected him to be perfect. Yet this is impossible. So Jonathon was left with a sense of being inadequate. Perhaps Jonathon also was thinking that the problems at home had happened because of him.

Focus: This means something becomes a central thing in your life. For Jonathon it was the fact that he was separated from his family.

Learns behaviour: At age 13, he learnt the pleasure he got from masturbation after reading an adult sex book.

Addiction: this is when something begins to control your life, money, body or time. Jonathon was masturbating several times a day so this behavior was now an addiction.

I was left physically drained, feeling very guilty and with poor self esteem

Sex was the most compelling force in my life. The more I got involved with it the more frustrated I became.

Despair: the feeling of guilt and hopelessness which came when the pleasure was over. Jonathan also had poor self-esteem.

So to deal with his guilt and poor self-esteem as well as the pain of being separated from his parents he again sought comfort in the pleasures of masturbation and pornography and so repeated the circle again ..and again...and again.

Wrong thinking. This usually involves thoughts which are mentioned in Chapter 11, Counselling and the section “Core Misbeliefs of the sexual struggler.”

Jonathon thought that Jesus was a killjoy.

Later he became a follower of Jesus but had this secret addictive life of sin.

From Jonathon’s life we learn that he had to deal with his unresolved trauma, shame and then “put off” the old

behaviours and addictions and “put on the new.” This transformed his life.

Masturbation

by Bob Davies (former Executive director of Exodus North America)

Something has to be said about masturbation. After all most men do it and it is certainly part of the addictive behaviours of many men. The example of Rajiv’s addictive masturbation was previously mentioned.

Definition: The stimulation of the sexual organs to orgasm usually done by yourself.

Common Misconceptions

First of all, let’s destroy a few common myths about the subject.

Myth #1: *Masturbation will cause harmful physical effects.*

There is absolutely no medical proof that sexual self-stimulation causes any adverse physical symptoms, such as disease, blindness, etc. Parents sometimes use these threats to provide motivation to stop, a tactic which never works.

Myth #2: *Masturbation is an uncommon problem, and most Christians don’t have to struggle with it.*

Wrong! It is an issue most people have to deal with at some time in their own life, whether they like to admit

it or not. My personal experience proves that Christians do have problems with it and conversion is no magical solution to any problem, including this one.

Myth #3: *Masturbation is mentioned in the Bible as a sin.*

Usually, this idea is connected with the story of Onan in Genesis 38. Onan’s story has nothing to do with masturbation; he was killed for his willful refusal to impregnate his deceased brother’s wife, as God commanded him to. He was practising coitus interruptus (withdrawal of the penis before orgasm), a method of birth control. Some have suggested that abusers of themselves (I Cor. 6:9, KJV) and those who dishonour their own bodies (Rom. 1:24, KJV) are those who masturbate. However, a careful study of these verses shows that they are referring in context to those who practice homosexuality, not self-stimulation of the genitals.

Myth #4: *Masturbation is my biggest problem.*

This is a common reaction, and is totally untrue. Masturbation is only the outward act, which is prompted by inward conflicts and desires. The things going on inside you that result in the outward act are what you must try to deal with. Masturbation shows that there are inward needs not being met, especially when its practice is frequent and compulsive.

Physical Motivations

There are many possible incentives to masturbate. Part of the frustration for men is that, from a medical

point of view, there is a legitimate need for release in the male. There is a continual production of semen in the male gonads, which is stored in two internal storage tanks, called the seminal vesicles. When these are filled, the sexual drive comes alive and the desire for some sort of release becomes conscious.

We have to be truthful here. Some men are able to depend solely on wet dream night emissions for their release, so that ejaculation occurs during sleep with no sexual self-stimulation occurring. Other men find it very difficult to always wait for this automatic release to occur, especially when they know from past experience that it is still several days away and their sexual drive is strong. Due to the male physiological make-up, the desire for a sexual release can arise strongly in our mind without any sinful encouragement on our part. It's just the way that God created our bodies as men. With women, there is no such need for physical release, and the desire for sexual expression is more psychological.

Emotional Motivations

In the past, God has shown me that at different times, an increasing problem with masturbation arose from a deeper cause: loneliness. If you are not willing to be real with other Christians, you may succeed in appearing “together”, but you will be lonely inside. If we have a lack of self-confidence, the desire to be liked by others may bring us into bondage. It will cause us to act in ways which are not a true expression of who we really are. We may act out a role for the sake of acceptance by

others. Even if they then accept us, they are responding to the person they think we are, rather than to the individual we *really* are. This results in a feeling of isolation and loneliness. These emotions will encourage masturbation, to make ourselves “feel good”, to assure ourselves that we're really OK and nice to be around.

The problem is, masturbation does nothing to cure loneliness. It only worsens it, due to the fact that you are looking to yourself to satisfy your desires. God wants you to look to Him first of all, and also to relate to others in the body of Christ in an open, loving way (no matter how frightening or impossible that may seem) to satisfy the deepest needs of your heart.

Another possible motivation for masturbation is frustration. If life is not as satisfying or as exciting as you wish it were, a sexual climax is obviously no permanent solution. Sex is an experience that God designed to be shared with your married partner. So, even though your flesh is being satisfied, masturbation is ultimately increasing your frustration, not decreasing it.

Is it always wrong to masturbate? This is a most difficult question to answer, and one that causes strong opinions on both sides. While Scripture clearly speaks out against sexual immorality and adultery, it does appear to say nothing on masturbation. However, when in Sri Lanka in 2002 someone said that the translation in his Bible of abusers of themselves with mankind in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 was written as “masturbation”.

The following summary will be helpful:

1. Masturbation is always wrong when it is accompanied by lustful thoughts. Every one who looks on a woman (or another man) to lust for her (him) has committed adultery with her (him) already in his heart. (Matt. 5:28) This also applies to daydreaming about an attractive person who you have previously seen somewhere. Job said, "I have made a covenant (agreement) with my eyes..." (Job 31:1) and we must do the same thing, to control what (or who) our eyes linger on. Anything which encourages lust, must be forsaken: a pornographic book, questionable movies, even TV programmes and conversations that we know we can't honestly handle. "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes..." (Psalm 101:3) applies here.

2. Masturbation is always wrong when you are enslaved to it, and have lost your free choice. "Our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." (Romans 6:6) Masturbation can definitely cause problems. For example, many think that marriage is the solution; although the truth is that the problem (lack of self-control) will arise again after marriage if it is not dealt with. The way that you satisfy your sexual appetite in masturbation tends to programme your sexual responses. If you come to a fast climax every time, you are creating problems for yourself in your marriage, as your wife must be brought to orgasm much more slowly than that. You would then have to re-learn your sexual patterns, in order to delay your ejaculation.

3. Masturbation is always wrong if you have heard from God personally that is sinful for you to do it. To (the) one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin (James 4:17). It may be that God is simply working on other areas of your life first, and will get those taken care of before speaking to you about masturbation. Don't let your freedom in this area become a stumbling block for other Christians. For some, masturbation is the last habit of the old lifestyle that they stubbornly hold on to. They have stopped sex outside of marriage, but refuse to give up the old memories and fantasies that are nurtured during masturbation. If this is true for you, God is being blocked from doing further healing in this area of your life (your sexuality). You must put your hand to the plough, and do not look back any longer (Luke 9:62).

4. Masturbation is always wrong when you feel it separates you from God. There is only one thing that can separate us from God: sin. "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God." (Isaiah 59:2). Feelings are a hard thing to be honest about: you may be separated from God without admitting that you feel it. Ask God to help you to be honest and discerning about this.

Conclusion

God created sex to be more than a release of tension. He wanted it to promote love, commitment and permanence in a marriage relationship. Masturbation lacks any of these things. Can we imagine Jesus

masturbating? Refuse to be satisfied with less than the best. But don't make rash promises about stopping forever. Live one day at a time and remember that God doesn't intend for us to fight our battles without His help. Refuse any condemnation and despair; such things do not come from a loving Father. Keep your eyes on Jesus alone, for if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed (John 8:36).

We have mentioned a number of problems. The last one is cross-dressing, that is, a man being dressed and living as a woman, or a woman being dressed and living as a man. A sad feature of Asian families is the number of parents who reject the gender of the child born to them.

This happens as there is so much emphasis on the first-born child needing to be a son or so much favour is shown to the first-born son.

We heard stories of parents who, for many years, dressed their child as the opposite gender causing incredible damage to the gender identity of the child.

Wendy and Billy know all about this. Wendy was brought up as a boy and never really knew she was a girl until she had her first period. It is not surprising that she was very masculinised having very short hair and wearing male clothing all her life.

Billy was brought up as a girl. Now read his story.

Cross-dressing... "A man at last"

Billy, the first and only son, was born and lived in a village in Indonesia and lived with his parents, grandparents and sisters. When he was born, his parents had so much wanted a girl that he was brought up as a girl. He was dressed as a girl and played with the girls all his life. Sadly, he had no close friends with boys, as they did not want to play with him, as he only liked "girls' games and cooking".

He hated it, felt abandoned, lonely, unloved and rejected. This sad situation of the total feminization of his character continued until his teenage years. He also had a father who was emotionally distant and was never interested in him.

When he left the village at age 17 for Jakarta to find work, he was not successful. So it was not surprising that he turned to making easy money as a "female prostitute". At least someone wanted him! The money he earned also helped pay for his developing drug habit.

At 22 he was arrested by the police and imprisoned for a short time. During his prison stay, he met Christians who offered him accommodation in a rehabilitation center after his imprisonment. There was one condition. He had to wear male clothes. This was not easy but the fact that he had become a Christian in prison did help him. So for the first time in his life, in the rehabilitation center he was wearing men's clothes, living with men and being treated as a man.

This was all very challenging for Billy. At first the rehabilitation staff thought that he might seduce the other men, but in fact it was more a temptation for the other men to try to seduce him! So boundaries were put in place, such as not allowing men to go to his bedroom. This made him feel a lot safer.

He has a long journey ahead of him to becoming a “man” and is slowly growing in his faith, attending Church and Bible study regularly. The staff and residents are friendly and caring, being both “brothers and fathers” to him. He now feels good about his life. At last he is accepted and wanted. Something he wanted all his life is happening at last; to be a man, to be part of God’s true plan for sexuality.

CHAPTER 7

Pornography

Definition:

Pornography is explicit material designed to promote sexual desire outside God’s design. Ref : Purity in the age of Porn. (Matthias Minizines)

Internet pornography is a huge problem for Christians across the world.

In 1961 the introduction of the birth control pill helped bring the Sexual Revolution in the West. Some say that the psychological and social impact of Internet pornography, which began in the early 1990’s, is also a revolution.

Today, as part of that revolution, there is greater access to pornography than ever before. Only about 20 years ago pornography was “out there” in shops, magazines, videos and the cinema meaning you had to go somewhere to buy it or watch it. Then it moved into the home via the Internet in the 1990’s’. You could now get it for nothing, 24 hours a day via a computer or on your lap top.

Now in 2012, it is “In your pocket” 24 hours a day via mobile phones, i-pads or other technology. It is easily available, accessible and you can be anonymous when you watch it.

The article, “*What Men Want*” (INDIA TODAY magazine September 20th 2004) stated that ‘Pornography is the medium of instruction,’ meaning the message of pornography is that women are sex objects who only want sex. This is only one of many reasons why pornography is so destructive to all, but especially to women.

To prove this, studies on sexual criminals reveal that they were often addicted to pornography. Ted Bundy executed in the USA in 1989 for sexually abusing and murdering at least two dozen young women, was perhaps the most infamous. Before he was executed, he mentioned how his terrible crimes had been influenced by the pornography he was addicted to. Wonderfully Ted Bundy made Christ his Lord and Saviour before he died.

What is pornography?

The Oxford Paperback Dictionary 1979 defines pornography as “*Writings, pictures, films, words etc that are intended to stimulate erotic feelings by description or portrayal of sexual activity.*”

Originally the Greek word “*porno*” meant, “Bought, purchased, sold, exported,” and is related to another Greek word that meant “I sell’ or “I give for equal value”. “*Porne*” in Greek means “harlot,” “whore,” “prostitute.”

Prostitutes in ancient Greece were often victims of the slave trade, just as they are today, especially in Asian countries. To show men that prostitutes were nearby and available for sex, the women wrote sexual messages on the walls or used sexual diagrams. So the “*writing of the prostitutes*” became known as *pornography*. (Similarly, a place became known as a “red light district” because a red light in a window indicated a prostitute was there.)

It could be said that pornography is, “Looking on the nakedness of someone other than your married partner.” This violates Genesis 2: 25 which states of Adam and Eve, “they were naked and not ashamed,” meaning we are only allowed to look on the “nakedness of our married partner.”

Leviticus 18, and 20:11 also tells us not to look on “other people’s nakedness.”

Christians are called to:-

- avoid evil: (1 Thessalonians 5:22 Ephesians 5:3,4)

- be self-controlled (Galatians 5:22)
- flee lusts (1Corinthians 6:18)

The Bible and Pornography

Nothing is directly mentioned in the Bible about pornography. Yet we are told to “flee immorality,” (1 Corinthians 6:18), which would include any sexual activity outside of marriage, such as pre or extra marital sex or homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6: 9-11). None of these behaviours, including looking at pornography, lead to a holy life and would certainly be things to “flee”. However, other issues that relate to pornography are clearly mentioned in the Bible.

1. Children

Children are often used in pornography and the exploitation and harming of children is condemned in Matthew 18:6-10.

2. Our Body

In pornography men, women and children are only seen as objects of sexual pleasure and are only seen to be of value if they have a sexually attractive body.

Yet Psalm 139 says our body is wonderful and we are to be valued for whom we are and not just because we are sexually attractive. For Christians, the body becomes the “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1Cor 6:19). We are also called to value others for whom they are and not only if they are sexually attractive or young.

3. Our Eyes

Job 31:1 says “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully on a woman.” Women also should not look lustfully on men. Jesus gave the same warnings in Matthew 5: 28, 29 when He warned of the dangers of impure thoughts which lead to impure behaviour.

4. Women

Jesus honoured women as He knew all of God’s creation was “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Pornography dishonours them.

Why is Pornography Wrong?

1. **Value.** It destroys the true image and likeness of God in people. We are made like Him. Genesis 1:26 –28. Pornography devalues as it suggests people are only valuable if sexually desirable. It raises the suggestion “Only a REAL man or a REAL woman is sexually attractive,” or “You are only of value if you have a nice body.” The Bible says that godly character is more important than how you look. 1 Peter 3: 4

2. **Nakedness.** Pornography is against God’s plan that nakedness is only in marriage. We must not look on anyone else’s nakedness. Gen.2:25, Leviticus 18.

3. **Worship.** Pornography leads to the idolatry of worshipping sex. We must only worship the Lord, not sex, Matthew 4:10.

4. **Relationships.** Pornography destroys normal human relationships. Colossians 3: 5-14. Many marriages have been destroyed when the husband became addicted to pornography and therefore not satisfied with his wife. Pornography can become addictive, so it will never satisfy like a real relationship can.

5. **Honour.** Christianity gives a place of honor to women and children while pornography exploits suggesting people are only for sexual pleasure.

6. **Law.** Usually pornography is judged by the courts of the world as obscene and is therefore illegal. To use it, or get others to use it, can break the law of the land.

7. **Money.** It exploits people and children by making money from pictures of their naked bodies. Then unknown people pay money to look at “their nakedness” in the pornographic movies or pictures. Pornography and greed for money feed on each other as partners in evil. 1Timothy 6:10.

Those in poverty are often forced to be involved with pornography, otherwise they have no money to live or buy food.

8. **Families.** It threatens the good and godly family values of both Western and Asian society.

9. **Mind.** There is damage to the mind and relationships because of sexual fantasy, Matthew 5:28, Galatians 6:7, Hosea 8:7. As the mind becomes polluted by sexual fantasies, it would need to be renewed and cleansed.

Romans 12: 1-2. In Philippians 4:8 it says to “think on that which is pure, good and lovely.” Pornography is neither pure, good or lovely. It traps you in your mind with sexual fantasies, which never satisfy. Only real, human relationships can satisfy; not relationships with pictures.

10. **Takes Control.** Pornography can be addictive and addictions never satisfy. Much time and money can be wasted on pornography.

Often when introduced to young children or adolescents it can stimulate sexual urges over which they have little or no self-control. It can effect adults the same way and being addictive, can lead to lack of self-control with our sexual appetites, desires and behaviour.

Two major areas of concern are:

- Sexual assault. As reports on sexual crimes show, pornography is often the stimulus for sexual assault.
- Sexual relationships. God wants us to have a sexual relationship only with our married partner, not be sexually stimulated by a pornographic picture which might be of someone else’s husband, wife, mother, father, son or daughter.

11. **Anti-God.** It is anti-Christian and anti-God for all of the above reasons.

In conclusion, the effects of pornography, on body, mind, spirit and relationships are always harmful.

Who is affected by Pornography?

Men are particularly vulnerable to pornography as they are stimulated sexually by what they see. The eyes can be a big problem for men, whether they are young or old.

King David saw Bathsheba naked, then he committed adultery with her. (2 Samuel 11:2).

Job 31:1 says, "I have made a covenant with my eyes that I sin not."

In Matthew 5:27 and 28, Jesus says, "Don't look on a woman with lust." This is referring to developing a habit of looking on women lustfully. Of course, even one thought of lust about any man, woman or child is always a sin. It needs to be understood that Jesus is not talking about the momentary appreciation of someone's beauty or personality.

Teenagers with emerging sexual feelings and often little self-control over sexual feelings are very vulnerable to the harmful effects of pornography.

Women and Pornography.

While it is usually men who have problems with pornography, there is also a growing trend for women to watch pornography. I have heard stories of young Indian women also known to be looking at pornography in Internet shops with their boyfriend or with other workers during office hours.

In the West some bored housewives have this problem. The Sydney Morning Herald, May 26 –27, 2007, reported that one in three Australian viewers of internet pornography were women. The reasons they gave for visiting a pornographic site were: boredom at being home alone for long hours, curiosity about other people's sexual behavior and being sexually aroused by the sexual language in the pornography.

In an Exodus Asia Pacific Conference in Melbourne, Australia in May 2007, a number of women stated that what drew them to pornography was very similar to the things mentioned above.

- Sexually arousing words which were written or spoken in the pornography. The power of words is that by making a suggestion, someone can create a fantasy.
- Curiosity about sexual/bizarre positions or a natural curiosity about other people's sexual activities.

What is true for Australia is probably true for Asia.

Advice for those with Internet Pornography Problems.

To overcome pornography or to avoid it there needs to be discipline, control and boundaries. We all need to learn the importance of these values in our lives. They need to be taught us at a young age and it is especially important where pleasure is involved. For example, children having sweets at special occasions and not whenever they want them.

It is the same with sex. There is the need for discipline, control and boundaries to wait to have sex only in marriage, not before it, or with people other than your married partner.

Boundaries.

If men have a problem with internet pornography then they need to be disciplined and set boundaries about their use of the computer. These could be that they never use the internet, (or go to an internet shop) alone or when everyone is asleep.

Discipline.

If someone is sick, they probably see the doctor regularly for a “check-up” on their health. If they have a problem with pornography it is important that they have a “check-up” with someone regularly to discuss their problem. This is discipline and accountability.

Control

Parents need to control and supervise what children look at on the internet. Don't allow your children to watch internet alone for hours.

Protection of Youth.

Arnold Toynbee, great historian and student of world civilization stated that a culture which postpones rather than stimulates sexual experience in the young, is a culture which is prone to progress (p.11 *Moral Catastrophe Hocking*)

Some ways in which families and the Church can postpone sexual experience in the young would include:

- Giving sex education that values and understands sexuality.
- Teaching the importance and equality of men and women.
- Teaching the importance of religious and moral values for life.
- Teaching the dangers of sex outside of marriage.

Dangers for Young Girls in Internet Chat-Rooms.

As young girls are especially vulnerable to danger from internet chat rooms here is some advice.

1. If anyone makes you feel uncomfortable on line, report this to your parents or teachers. Or get help from counselors.
2. Don't allow anyone to persuade you into meeting them or giving personal information about yourself, mobile phone number etc.
3. Don't give out personal information about yourself that can be used against you. Also don't send them your personal pictures.
4. To avoid problems such as sexual suggestions, don't chat with people you don't know.
5. Don't engage in flirting on line.

India.

In India and many Asian countries, the opposite sex is viewed as “unknown”, “a mystery” and often there is very little social contact between the two sexes. Men have many questions about women but no one to give them answers. So pornography, in a wrong way, helps to answer some of their questions and they “interact” with unknown women via telephone, prostitutes, pornographic DVD’s etc. There are also “under-counter” sales of pornographic DVD’s, books etc that are easily available.

Sex is a mystery, as generally it is not discussed in the home, church or other religious groups. Pornography is therefore seen as a way to explain the “mystery of sex.”

In Asia, one reason why women generally don’t view pornography very much is that they have less social freedoms to access it than men. However, this is changing with well-educated and well-travelled women having many more social freedoms than their mothers which then gives them access to internet and then pornography.

Questions we have been asked about pornography.

Q1: Should married couples (Christian or non-Christian) watch pornography to make their sex life more exciting?

Answer: It will not help their marriage be more exciting and the danger is that while one partner will want to stop

looking at pornography (usually the woman), the man remains addicted. He is usually the one who has suggested that they watch it. If a marriage needs more excitement in it, God would not choose to bless any marriage through the use of something that is sinful. It is always better to attend marriage enrichment courses or seek proper marriage counseling than watch pornography.

Sadly, even married Christians who are in leadership, watch pornography. While in Hyderabad, India, Ramesh told us how he had stayed at his Pastor’s home and discovered a box of pornographic videos and DVD’s. He did not tell the Pastor what he had found. Then late one night he saw the Pastor and his wife watching a DVD which they immediately switched off when he entered the room. He believed that they were watching pornography.

Q2. Is pornography helpful to give you sex education?

Answer: No. Pornography is never helpful. If you need sex education, get it from proper text books or a medical doctor.

Q3. Is Pornography legal?

Answer: No. Pornography is not legal anywhere in the world.

Q4. Will pornography make me more modern and liberated?

Answer: No. Pornography never makes for a liberated and healthier country, marriage, man, woman or child. It does not liberate it only makes people slaves to sexual desires.

Case Study: *Freedom from addiction.*

After a seminar in Chennai, India, Arun, a 25 year old, single, Christian businessman came to see me. He was very nervous and asked me to guarantee that I would not tell anyone about our discussion. Amidst tears and silences he told me off his Internet pornography problem that dominated his life. His story was so similar to many others I had heard.

Brought up in a Christian home with two other brothers and one sister he was happy but always felt he did not “fit” into the family. He had caring parents but his father was often away on business and when home did not spend time with Arun but seemed to prefer the other children. Arun was sensitive, creative, preferred music and art to sport and so only had a few school friends all of his school life. Isolation and loneliness haunted him.

At the age of ten years Arun was molested by an older male relative who taught him about masturbation, a habit that began to dominate his young life. The molestation continued for a number of years. At age 12, wonderfully he became a Christian and wondered what God thought of his masturbation problem and why God had allowed him to be sexually abused.

When he was 15 he visited a friend’s house and was shown pornographic books for the first time. This only drove him to masturbation even more. Then he started watching pornographic movies, videos and DVD’s, which were both cheap and easily available. His life was dominated by pornography and masturbation, which gave him some form of comfort in his lonely existence. By the time he met me he was daily watching Internet pornography for up to four hours and sometimes masturbating six times daily. This was a major problem.

Overwhelmed by guilt, shame and fear, he wondered if God could forgive him and if he could ever be free from his problems. He also felt too frightened and ashamed to make friends in case they discovered his problem and there was also no one he dared speak with.

To help Arun I suggested that he:-

- Become accountable to his pastor about his problem.
- That he does not spend hours alone in his room at night with his computer and instead talks to other family members.
- Seeks healthy wholesome friendships to break his boredom and give him true intimacy.

He realized that he was using pornography not just for sexual pleasure but somehow, for a short time it seemed to give him something he was looking for in life – some sense of intimacy and self-confidence. Of course, this was a false sense of intimacy and self-confidence.

The good news is that Arun followed my advice and with a helpful Pastor slowly began his journey out of pornography. He has a long way to go but change is possible.

Sadly, his story is so similar to those of the many men who spoke with me after the seminars on sexuality that my wife and I have given in Asia. Over 200 men and 100 women have come for counseling with sexual problems. Of these, 56 men but only six women had a pornography problem. The good news was that I heard how some of them had overcome their addiction to pornography. (More testimonies of people overcoming sexual addictions are in Chapter 6).

On our missions trip to Asia in 2007 we noticed with great concern some of the emerging new groups with Internet pornography problems.

- Married men aged between 35 – 40 years.
- Single men, aged 20-30, in ministry leadership positions addicted to pornography. Rajinder, a Bible college student, said that his pornography problem started when he left his village and moved to Bible College in Delhi where he had unlimited and unsupervised access to the internet. He spoke of seeing students from other Bible Colleges who regularly watched pornography at the same Internet shop that he did. However, he overcame his pornography problem when he went back to his

village when he no longer had access to Internet as the village had no electricity!

- Pastors and men in leadership who confessed their internet pornography problem to me.

Finally in this poem, *The True Vaisnav*, translated by the man considered to be the Father of the Indian nation, Mahatma Gandhi, there are some powerful thoughts on women.

The same to all with no cravings of the mind

In every woman, a mother he does find

He is not avaricious or vile

Wrath and desire do not defile

Online Help

If you want on line to help overcome pornography here are Christian resources that are available.

Australia

www.settingcaptivesfree.com

www.thefight.com.au

<http://www.no-porn.com/breaking.html>

<http://www.no-porn.com/index.php>

USA

<http://www.pureintimacy.org/pornographyaddiction/>

<http://www.pureonline.com/help-for-porn-addiction.cfm>

<http://www.sexualrecovery.com/pornography-addiction.php>

<http://pornographyaddiction.com/>

<http://www.firesofdarkness.com/>

<http://www.joedallas.com/services.cfm?pid=10> - telephone counseling

www.healingforthesoul.org - telephone counseling

www.livehope.org - on-line forums

<http://www.everymansbattle.com/+> <http://www.newlife.com/>

<http://xxxchurch.com/> - computer accountability monitoring

We will see in the next chapter what God's plan for sexuality is.

CHAPTER 8

God's Plan for Sexuality

Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18

Men and women are made in the image of God so this means we are like Him. Just as He loves, so we can love. Just as He gives life, so we can give life. Just as He has a relationship with the Son and Holy Spirit and wants a relationship with us, so we too are made for relationships with Him and other people.

"Sexuality and spirituality are not enemies but friends." It was Donald Goergen who wrote this. (Foster, 1985)

We see this truth in Genesis 2:7 where Adam who is of the earth of the ground, therefore also physical and sexual, has the Spirit of God. However, many Christians

in Asia would disagree with Donald Goergen believing that sexuality is only the physical desire for sex. While sexuality includes the physical, genital desire for sex, it is more than that. Sexuality at the heart is relational, it is not totally genital, and is defined as: “A basic drive towards intimate communion”, i.e. the need to know and be known.

This truth is shown in Genesis 2:18 where God says, “It is not good that man (Adam) is alone”. So God creates Eve to be a companion for him. The great Christian writer C. S. Lewis wrote, “Intimacy is having an appetite for God” so in intimacy we can also have a relationship with God. From Genesis 1:28 and 2:23 we see that sexuality involves four areas.

1. Sexual Behaviour - “be fruitful and multiply.”
2. Gender Identity - “male and female created He them.”
3. Attractions (emotional and psychological responses) as Adam said to Eve with joy, “This is now bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23).
4. Lifestyle - “fill the whole earth and subdue it” - so you live according to your godly sexual attractions.

Of these, identity is a primary (most important) expression of sexuality. Resulting from this are secondary expressions: behaviour, attractions and lifestyle. Thus identity determines everything else.

Sexuality is also influenced by biology, psychology, and physiology. In other words, who we are by “nature” are those unchangeable characteristics with which we are

born, such as our colour, features and temperament. We could say these are “internal” influences.”

There are other “external” influences as well, such as sociology, family, friends, etc., which “nurture” or shape and influence our sexuality. Were we wanted? Did our friends accept us? How did your father treat women? External influences can change us, for better or worse.

Sexuality also involves a relationship and intimacy with:

- (a) God - It involves the way we feel that God has made us. Do you like the way God has made you?
- (b) Myself - Do I see myself as an adequate male or female? Do I like myself?
- (c) Opposite sex - How do I get on with the opposite sex? Am I afraid of them? Am I unsure of them?
- (d) Same sex - Do I feel I am as equal as the next person? Or do I feel inferior?
- (e) Others - How do I think others see me? Do they accept me?

From God’s pattern of sexuality in Genesis we can see God planned that:

1. We have an innate (by nature) opposite sex attraction.
2. Sexual intimacy is good and only meant for
 - Marriage,
 - In a male-female relationship

- Love and lifelong commitment

(All three must be considered to define if God approves a sexual relationship or sexual activity). We can also have non-sexual intimacy such as friendships.

3. We have a definite gender identity as male or female.
4. We need a sense of integration (harmony) between our spirituality and sexuality, so that the Spirit of God controls our normal sexual needs and desires.
5. God has given us all a sense of interdependence, so that we need each other and cannot live alone.
6. That men and women are equal in the sight of God.

We can see then that only in the heterosexual (opposite sex relationships) is there the potential for true, complete gender compatibility, physically, mentally and spiritually. We only have to see how God has designed the sexual parts of the male and female to understand this. However, this does not mean everyone has to get married. We can have very fulfilling relationships with the opposite sex and still not be married. Jesus never married but He had many women followers so He must have had a good relationship with them.

We should consider:

- (a) A key quality of men is activity: men like to do things, to work, protect and provide for their families. Often they are the leaders in the world.

“At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s different relationships.” (Ref: John Piper and Wayne Grumden, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, Wheaton: Crossways Books 1991).

(b) A key quality of women is developing relationships. They also nurture (take care of) the family and are intuitive, (they sense things) and like to listen. Of course, as we are made in the image of God, the above gender qualities of men and women are a reflection of Him rather than believing that only men can lead or only women can nurture.

So we see that God, in Genesis, is not only very “masculine” by working, but also “feminine” by creating. Later in Matthew 23:37 we read that He is also kind, compassionate and nurturing, which are what we call “feminine” characteristics.

How does Sin Affect Sexuality?

One word sums up what sin has done to sexuality. Shame. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, God’s perfect plan for sexuality was affected. It is now shame-based (Genesis 3:8). It is something that we do not discuss easily amongst friends, family or even the Church. Men and women hide themselves from each other, God and the world in this area. They would rather not talk about it.

So since Adam and Eve's sin, sexuality is broken - there is sex out of marriage, sex between women and women, men and men, adults and children. There are AIDS and many other sexually transmitted diseases. People seek love through sex and think sex means love. Sex is considered dirty and only for having children.

Apart from that, men are often assertive and aggressive against women and not in touch with their emotions. Rather than protect women, they abuse them. Rather than seeing women as their equal they think women are here on earth to serve them. Sadly, this happens even among Christians.

Women can be controlling of relationships and in the home they are like a matriarch. Or they can be the opposite; passive, not having an opinion of their own and only there to serve others and over emotional.

For the Christian struggling with sexuality, there is a tension between the knowledge and experience of God and how to obey Him. Many give up their faith or feel they are a bad Christian, as they don't understand sexuality and what God has to say about sexual struggles. They feel God can never forgive them for sexual sins.

So today throughout the world, many Christians struggle with sexuality. On our trips to Asia we have counselled Christians struggling with: homosexuality, cross-dressing, prostitution, HIV/AIDS, STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), sexual abuse, paedophilia, sexual addictions (masturbation, pornography), adultery, male

and female prostitution and lesbianism. We have even met the Hitjra of India, male eunuchs living as women, sometimes as prostitutes. It is of interest that no Asian women have come forward for help with emotional dependency whereas in the west, lesbianism and emotional dependency are often inter-related.

Often the sexual struggler feels all is hopeless: that they cannot change: that God hates them: that they can never be forgiven. Is there hope for them? Yes, the Gospel of Sexual redemption.

CHAPTER 9

The History of Sexual Redemption in the Bible

Redemption means: to win back to the original owner. Our original owner is God. In His death on the cross, Jesus redeemed the whole world “as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Roman 3:23). On the Cross Jesus took every sin, every wound, every hurt into His body and died with them to break their power over us.

This is what Isaiah 53:4,5 means when it says “Surely He took our griefs and sorrows.” This refers to our emotional pain such as guilt, shame and rejection. Not only can we be forgiven of sin but there is also

emotional healing through the Cross. This includes forgiveness of sexual sin and healing in our sexuality. The Cross therefore, is the sign of our Sexual Redemption. It is clear from reading the Bible that God does love all people even though we all disobey Him. Yet from the time Adam and Eve sinned against God (Genesis 3:1-7), and became ashamed of their sexuality, He has sought to bring us back to Himself, to forgive and redeem us. As we obey God, no matter what our sins have been, we begin the journey to become the men and women He wants us to be.

Listed below are examples of those who committed sexual sins. Yet God's love and kindness towards them led them to repentance (Romans 2:4). However, there is always a penalty for sin. Sexual sin is very serious especially when it is by people in authority such as King David and leaders such as Samson.

1. **Rahab**, the prostitute (Joshua 2 and 6). Rahab was a prostitute working in Jericho when she met the two men spies from Israel who had come to see how strong the city was. She saved them from being captured. In return she and her family were the only ones to survive the destruction of Jericho. She then joined the people of Israel and married Salmon, a Jew. Amazingly she was not only the great grandmother of King David, (Matthew 1:5-7), but is also mentioned as direct ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:16) and as a woman of faith in Hebrews 11:31.

2. **Samson** (Judges 16) Was he a sexual addict? He was sexually involved with a prostitute (Judges 16:1) and also had sexual relationships with Philistine women which his religion warned him against. (Judges 14:3, 16:4). His sexual sins led to his fall from usefulness to God, disgrace, imprisonment and blindness. While God forgave him, and Samson later had his greatest victory over his enemies, he still died, blind and a captive.
3. **King David** (2 Samuel 11 and 12). When David was King he committed adultery with Bathsheba who became pregnant. To cover his sin, David arranged for Uriah, Bathsheba's husband to be killed in battle. Bathsheba had David's baby but sadly it died. Out of his guilt, sorrow and repentance over adultery and murder, David wrote Psalm 51. Yet God forgave him and used him mightily.
4. **The woman who was a sinner** (prostitute) (Luke 7:36-40). Tradition has it that the prostitute was Mary Magdalene who later became one of Jesus closest followers. Mary was the first to witness and proclaim the resurrection of Jesus (Mark 16:1-9).
5. **The Woman at the Well** (John 4:4-41). Jesus met her at a well where she was coming to get water. It seems even her own friends did not like her for she had been married five times and she was living with a man who was not her husband. He knew she was thirsting for real relationships. So He said that He

had something that would satisfy her thirst forever – a relationship with Him. Not only does she confess Him as Christ but also many others did (John 4:39-43).

6. **The Adulteress** (John 8:3-11). The religious leaders bring a woman caught in the very act of adultery to Jesus. They wanted her to be stoned to death so they asked Him for His opinion of her adultery. First, He disapproved of the self-righteousness of those who wanted to stone her, no doubt challenging them about their own secret sins (John 8:7). Then He spoke to the woman. While Jesus did not approve of her adultery, neither did He condemn her. So He said to the woman, “Go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

It is interesting there is no mention of the man with whom she committed adultery! Even in those days it seems that men wanted to only blame a woman when adultery was committed.

7. **The Church of Corinth** (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). In this Church there were many who had once been sexually immoral, homosexuals or adulterers. Yet they had received God’s forgiveness (they were washed), their lives were changed by the power of the Holy Spirit (they were sanctified) and they were living a life of faith (they were justified). These wonderful stories show how God redeemed sexual sinners to Himself.

8. **Ancestry of Jesus.** Finally, remember in the ancestry of Jesus (Matthew 1:3) there is mention of Judah, the father of the twins Perez and Zerah by Tamar, his daughter-in-law. This refers to the story in Genesis 38. Tamar pretends to be a prostitute, Judah has sex with her and she becomes pregnant.

In Matthew 1:5 it mentions that David was the father of Solomon by the wife (Bathsheba) of Uriah. Bathsheba had committed adultery with David prior to marrying him. Therefore two ancestors of Jesus had committed serious sexual sin!

That is why Jesus understands all our sins and temptations, including sexual ones. He Himself was tempted “in all ways like us” which must include sexual temptations but was without sin (Hebrews 4:14-16). Of course, we are not like Jesus as we are all sinners. Sin has sometimes controlled our lives. If so we have to recover from its effects.

CHAPTER 10

Understanding Recovery

What is recovery?

A good definition of recovery is “living a life beyond the problem so that it no longer controls you.” An important question often asked is, can people recover from sexual problems? Yes. This is not easy. There are no simple solutions.

There is both the evidence from Christian and secular professional counsellors and psychiatrists that people can change from unwanted sexual behaviours and attractions.

There is the promise of scripture that we can be a new person in Christ (2 Corinthians 5: 16 and 17) and that we can be renewed to reflect the image of God. We read in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 of people who had recovered from homosexuality, alcoholism, immorality etc. They were no longer living a life according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. This is done by obeying God.

There are also the testimonies that you have read in this book of the individuals who have changed. It is important to remember that change, the process of sanctification, takes time. Many people in recovery said that it was a lot easier to stop sexually immoral behaviour, than to change their sexual attractions and sexual identity. Nevertheless it did happen, but slowly.

So now let us look specifically at recovery. “You do not get healed first so that you can obey God. First, you choose to obey God in spite of the struggles and difficulties.” (Sy Rogers) This leads to healing. Both the sexual struggler and the counsellor need to have realistic expectations that the recovery process may take years. Some strugglers are like the lame man who, in John 5:5, had been sitting by the pool for 38 years, waiting to be healed. This is a long time. When he obeys the words of Jesus in John 5:8 to “Rise and walk,” his healing begins. He has started on the recovery process. Jesus who is the Wonderful Counselor, also gave counsel to the man in John 5:14 to “Go and sin no more”.

Recovery is not an instant cure or deliverance, or living life as if there were no problems or as if these problems never happened. Recovery is the process of sanctification that in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 involves being:

- (i) washed, that is cleansed of our sin, (I John 1: 7-10)
- (ii) sanctified, that is set apart to God, and
- (iii) justified, that is acceptable to God by the work of Jesus on the Cross. (Romans 3: 20 – 24)

Other important truths are God’s Grace, our repentance, His forgiveness of our sins, our obedience to His Word, having healthy relationships with the same-sex and the opposite-sex.

It is: putting off the old lifestyle and putting on the new lifestyle (Colossians 3:5-12).

What are some of the specific things for the client to put off and put on?

1. Put off the old identity i.e. no longer say “I am a homosexual or a lesbian.” Then put on the new identity (2 Corinthians 5:18) i.e. “I am a Christian man or woman, who struggles with homosexuality or immorality.” So they establish a spiritual identity in Christ, not in the problem.
2. Putting off all sinful habits and immoral sexual behaviour e.g. give up pornography that leads to sexual fantasies and masturbation problems. This involves

putting on the renewed mind (Romans 12:2) and self-control (Galatians 5:22) over wrong behaviour.

This might mean:

- Working at reducing sexual activity by not watching or reading sexually stimulating materials,
- Taking responsibility for wrong actions and being accountable to someone for our sexual behaviour.

3. Put off and eliminate wrong sexual attraction. This might mean they avoid all unhelpful relationships, conversations etc. Then put on new relationships i.e. meeting relational, friendship and intimacy needs in a biblical way by:

- Having healthy friendships with Biblical boundaries.
- Connecting to God through prayer and reading the Bible.
- Becoming involved and integrated into the Church.

By having healthy friendships the struggler learns these benefits:

(a) The interdependent life is healthy; to be isolated and alone is not healthy.

(b) Having a counsellor and support group for accountability is very helpful. Accountability gives you the means to fight temptation with others. You are not alone.

(c) That correct touch is also healing. That is why Jesus touched the lepers to heal them (Mark 1:41). No one had touched them in years. He could have easily only said “Be healed.” The experience of many sexual strugglers is that no one has ever touched them correctly. Touch often meant sex. So from learning correct touch the struggler can learn :

- That love and friendship does not equal sex,
- There is right and wrong touch.
- There is no sexual touch unless you are married.

As the struggler “puts off the old” and “puts on the new” they will begin to change and experience themselves with self-confidence, security and self-worth.

Men need to learn to:

- Protect and provide for the woman. (The word “till” in Genesis 2:15 also means, “to protect”.)
- Express their emotions. They must be aware how they are feeling emotionally and then feel safe and free to express it. For example, “I feel sad, lonely,” etc.
- Take responsibility within their relationships and help in home duties, with family, etc. In other words, whether single or married they must not live selfishly for themselves.

Women need to be protected by men and not protected from them. This is especially true for victims of sexual abuse. A protected woman will trust men and in turn learn to trust God. One of the sad facts is that when a woman is sexually or physically abused often both her relationship with men and God is affected (though in the story of sexually abused Bridget in chapter 5 we saw this did not happen).

Women can learn that:-

- God is their Heavenly Father Who loves and cares for them
- Healing and reconciliation with earthly parents/ family, friends is to be encouraged
- To forgive those who have sexually abused them.

Generational bondages - (Exodus 20:5). Sins such as adultery and alcoholism that parents and grandparents have committed and are influential on the client have to be broken by the power of prayer. Sexual temptations can still come but this does not mean we are not healed. We can learn to say “no”. Being free of such sins and destructive habits means we can be living like Jesus in the image of God.

Being Like Jesus

In Chapter 7 we stated that all men and women were made in the image of God. Yet sin has spoilt that image and also affected sexuality. We have looked at many of the sexual and relational problems caused by sin. So now it’s time to briefly look at what biblical heterosexuality is.

A good definition of biblical heterosexuality is: “someone who is secure in their gender role” and is:

- (i) “... comfortable and secure around others, especially those who are very different from them.”
- (ii) “... has the initiative and takes responsibility not only for making things happen but also to admit their failures...”
- (iii) “... has self control...” especially in areas of sexuality
- (iv) “... is likely to serve and take responsibility in the home, work, ministry rather than dominate with their position...”
- (v) “... is able to lead by Christ-like example...”
- (vi) “... is pure and has good relational boundaries.”
- (vii) ... can confess their mistakes, repent and ask forgiveness.”

Of course, Jesus is our ultimate example of being a role model for Biblical heterosexuality. Even though He never married or had sex with anyone, He was a real heterosexual man! In looking at the life of Jesus we see

that He was loved and trusted by children (Matthew 19: 13-14), men (John 13:1) and women (John 4). All felt safe with Him as there were relational boundaries.

“He was not afraid to express His emotions: He wept (John 11: 35) and showed anger (John 2: 15). He also expressed his needs: “I thirst” (John 19: 28), and “Watch with me a while,” (Matthew 26: 38). He also had friends, (John 13:23 and 21: 20).

Therefore we are all called to be like Jesus, the only person Who truly resembles the image of God. He belonged to the culture of the Kingdom of God. Regardless of what our culture might say about masculinity or femininity, our sexuality must show we belong to the Kingdom of God.

As healing and recovery take place the sexually and relationally broken will be more like Jesus, maturing into a healthy heterosexual man or woman made in the image of God.

CHAPTER 11

Counselling

In the West people readily seek counsellors to help with their problems and are not ashamed to say, “I am going for counseling.” In Asia it is different. Often people wanting to “keep face” won’t admit to themselves, let alone to someone else, that they have a problem with their sexuality and need help to overcome it . Or they feel counselling is unbiblical being “psychological”. They draw the conclusion that all you need to do is have some prayer, read your Bible more and the problem will go away. But that is not always the answer.

So what is Christian counselling? A good definition is “Christian Counselling seeks to stimulate personality growth and development to help people cope with and overcome problems of life especially where life habits are self-destructive such as immorality, drugs etc.”

To achieve this, the counsellor needs the following:

- Commitment to the counsellee.
- Faithfulness, caring, patience, endurance, steadfastness.
- Ability to be non-judgmental.
- Trustworthiness.
- Christ-like morality.

Some Advice for the Counsellor

1. Don't talk in terms of "curing" the person of homosexuality. They don't need to be cured of legitimate needs to love and be loved. Rather they have to learn how to express and receive love in a Christ like way.
2. Don't make the mistake of thinking an erotic relationship with the opposite sex is going to solve the counsellee's problems. They certainly don't need to be getting into a sexual relationship outside of marriage to try and solve their problem. Even an emotional relationship is not helpful. They don't need a boyfriend or girlfriend. Often the sexual struggler first has to understand how the opposite sex think and then learn how to relate to them. The most important relationship they need is one with Christ.

3. Do expect him/her to be accountable for their behaviour.
4. Do realize you could be supporting the person for a number of years.
5. Don't fall into the trap of casting out a demon to solve the problem.
6. Don't be afraid to touch, show affection. However, this is best done only when there are other counsellors present and it is culturally appropriate.

Some key questions to ask the sexual struggler include:

- What type of person are you attracted to?
- Why?
- Do you feel that you lack the quality of the person you are attracted to? For example, are you attracted to someone who is confident because you lack confidence; or feel inadequate at sports and so are attracted to someone who is sporty?
- What do you want to change about yourself or what don't you like about yourself? The struggler might need to work on their own self-image and self-esteem. In the appendix there is an exercise to do on self-image called "Valuing your sexuality."

For the Counsellee - or are they a client?

Rather than call someone a counsellee who is dependent on the counsellor solving their problems, it is

probably better to call them a client who must take responsibility for their own life.

One thing we should remember is that change takes time. Both the counsellor and the client need to be prepared that it may take months, even years for the client to come to total healing and change. Many people have spent years where they have been abused, rejected, insecure or involved in a particularly unhelpful lifestyle. Thus their attitudes, emotions and behaviour will not change overnight. Counsellors need to have patience with them and they need patience with themselves.

They may fall back into old sinful patterns of behaving and thinking many times.

The client needs to show:

1. A personal motivation for change.
2. Surrender and appeal to a kind and understanding God. Often a woman's understanding of God is influenced by her fear of men. It will take time and prayer to work this through. They will need to learn they are not alone in their healing. Jesus is with them as an ever-present help in time of trouble, and He will walk with them through this process as they call upon Him. Proverbs 18:10 "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."
3. Commitment to be a member of a support group where people are able to talk and pray together about similar problems. There are also email support groups.

4. Accountability to someone to whom they give the right to question about their problem and to whom they give an honest answer.
5. Honesty - no more denial about the problem otherwise this also adds to the problem. This often involves removing the fantasies, such as, "My parents were great, home life was wonderful, I was not sexually abused, and I don't have a sexual problem."
6. Repentance and Confession of:
 - (a) Sinful relationships/dependencies.

Placing someone or something as more important than God is idolatry. These relationships have to be broken through repentance and confession as you have become *one* with them. That is why Paul says, "Whoever joins himself with a prostitute becomes one with her" (1 Corinthians 6:15).
 - (b) Lifestyle, sexual practices, wrong attitudes, etc.
7. Forgiveness. Both giving and receiving of forgiveness is vital to the healing process. It involves releasing God from blame if we have accused Him of not protecting us (in situations such as sexual abuse), and seeking His forgiveness for any accusations against Him. This frees us to forgive ourselves and others and also to receive God's forgiveness. (1 John 1:7-10).
8. Restitution by putting right the wrongs of the past.

9. They need to show they are facing emotions by getting in touch with feelings that have been denied or suppressed for so long. The client may need to allow the emotion of anger to break through. Otherwise forgiveness will be shallow. They may need to go through a grieving process over the areas of loss such as:

- Innocence in childhood through sexual abuse
- Broken relationships with family, peers and even partners or lovers.

Core Misbeliefs of the Sexual Struggler

The core means something at the center or heart of something or someone. Proverbs 23:7 says, “As a man thinketh in his heart so he is.” Wrong thinking can lead to wrong behaviour; right thinking can lead to right behaviour.

The sexual struggler has some core misbeliefs that need to be addressed.

1. I am a bad and worthless person.
2. If people really knew me as I am they wouldn't like/love me.
3. No one will take care of my needs but me.
4. Sex is equal to love.

5. I am born this way and cannot change.

Some Scriptures to help break the wrong thinking are Psalm 51, Romans 5, 1 Peter 1:7-9, 1 John 1:9.

Healing for the client involves learning to talk, to trust, to feel, to relate.

God provides an environment - His church where people can learn to live in the way He wants. While the Church is not perfect it is necessary that clients be part of a Church.

CHAPTER 12

A Prayer for Sexual Healing

Healing for your sexuality is available; this is a very hopeful truth! But you must realise that your sexuality is very deep and core to your nature as a human being. Sexual brokenness can be one of the deepest types of brokenness a person experiences. You must take your healing seriously. It is important that you talk and pray with others about this. From experience, we have found that a married couple is best, but if not it is best if a male prays with a male and a female with a female.

First, when we misuse our sexuality through sin we give Satan an open door to oppress us in our sexuality. A man who uses pornography will find himself in a very deep struggle with lust; a woman who was sexually promiscuous before marriage may find herself wrestling with sexual temptation years afterwards. So it is important to bring our sexuality under the Lordship (and therefore protection) of the Lord Jesus Christ and seek His cleansing of our sexual sins.

Second, sexual brokenness – whether through abuse of our sexuality by our own actions or by the actions of others – can create sexual difficulties, and also opens the door for the enemy to oppress us. Quite often forgiveness is needed – both the confidence that we are forgiven by the Lord and also the choice we make to forgive others. This will prove immensely freeing.

Let us begin by bringing our lives and sexuality under the Lordship of Jesus Christ:

Lord Jesus Christ, I confess that you are my Creator (John 1:3) and therefore the creator of my sexuality. You are also my Saviour and have ransomed me with your blood (1Cor. 15:3, Matt. 20:28). I have been bought with the blood of Jesus Christ, my life and my body belong to God (1Cor. 6:19-20). Jesus, I present myself to you now to be made whole and holy in every way, including my sexuality. You also ask us to present our bodies to you as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1) and the parts of our bodies as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:13) I do this now. I present my body,

my sexuality (“as a man” or “as a woman”), and my sexual nature to you.

Next, renounce the ways you have misused your sexuality. The more specific you can be the more helpful this will be. Your sexuality was created by God for pleasure and joy within the context of the marriage covenant. Sexual activity outside of marriage can be very damaging to a person and to relationships (1 Cor. 6:18-20). In this part of the prayer you need to confess and renounce all sexual sin – for example, sexual intimacy outside of marriage, and also other forms of sexual intimacy such as mutual masturbation or oral sex. Many people assume these “don’t really count as sin” because they didn’t result in actual intercourse, however, there was sexual stimulation and intimacy outside marriage. Other sins to renounce would be marital affairs, the use of pornography, homosexual acts and sexual fantasies.

You may know what you need to confess and renounce, or you may need to ask God’s help to remember. As memories and events come to mind, confess and renounce them. For example, “*Lord Jesus, I ask your forgiveness for my sins of masturbation and using pornography. I renounce those sins in Your name.*” After you have confessed your sins, go on with the rest of the prayer.

Jesus I ask your Holy Spirit to help me now remember, confess, and renounce my sexual sins. (Pause. Listen. Remember. Confess and renounce.) Lord Jesus, I ask your

forgiveness for every act of sexual sin. You promised that if we confess our sins you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). I ask you to cleanse me of my sexual sins now, cleanse my body, soul and spirit, cleanse my heart and mind and will, cleanse my sexuality. Thank you for forgiving me and cleansing me. I receive your forgiveness and cleansing. I renounce every claim I have given Satan to my life or sexuality through sexual sins. Those claims are now broken by the cross and blood of Jesus Christ (Col. 2: 13-15).

Next comes forgiveness. It is vital that you forgive both yourself and those who have harmed you sexually. LISTEN CAREFULLY: forgiveness is a *choice*; we often have to make the *decision* to forgive long before we *feel* forgiving. This can be difficult, but the freedom you will find will be worth it. Forgiveness is not saying, “It didn’t hurt me.” “It didn’t matter.” Forgiveness is the act whereby we pardon the person, we release them from all the bitterness and judgment. We give them to God to deal with.

Lord Jesus, I thank you for offering me total and complete forgiveness. I receive that forgiveness now. I choose to forgive myself for all of my sexual wrongdoing. I also choose to forgive those who have harmed me sexually. (Be specific here, name those people and forgive them). I release them to you. I release all my anger and judgment towards them. Come, Lord Jesus, into the pain they caused me and heal me with your love.

This next step involves breaking the unhealthy emotional and spiritual bonds formed with other people

through sexual sin. The Bible takes sexual sin seriously because it does a lot of damage and causes bonds to be formed with people; bonds that should only be between husband and wife (see 1 Cor. 6:15-20). The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ breaks these unhealthy bonds. “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal. 6:14).

I now bring the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ between me and every person with whom I have been sexually intimate. (Name them specifically wherever possible. Also name those who have abused you sexually). I break all sexual, emotional and spiritual bonds with (...name..if possible, or just “that girl in high school” if you can’t remember her name). I keep the cross of Christ between us.

Many people experience negative consequences through the misuse of their sexuality: eg lingering guilt (even after confession), repeated sexual temptation or inability to enjoy sex with one’s spouse. It will help to bring the work of Christ here as well. Many people end up making unhealthy “agreements” about sex or themselves, about men or women or intimacy because of the damage they have experienced through sexual sin (their sin, or the sin of someone against them). You will want to ask Christ to remind you what those agreements are and *break them!*

I renounce (name what the struggle is – “the inability to have an orgasm” or “this lingering shame” or “the hatred of my body”). I bring the cross and blood of Jesus Christ against this (guilt or shame, every negative consequence). Lord Jesus, I also ask you to reveal to me any agreements I have made about my sexuality or this specific struggle. (An example would be “I will always struggle with this” or “I don’t deserve to enjoy sex now,” or “my sexuality is dirty.” Pause and let Jesus reveal those agreements to you. Then break them.) I break this agreement (name it) in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, and I renounce every claim I have given it in my life.

Finally, it will prove helpful to consecrate your sexuality to Jesus Christ once more.

Lord Jesus, I now consecrate my sexuality to you in every way. I consecrate my sexual intimacy with my spouse to you. I ask you to cleanse and heal my sexuality and our sexual intimacy in every way. I ask your healing grace to come and free me from all consequences of sexual sin. I ask you to fill my sexuality with your healing love and goodness. Restore my sexuality in wholeness. Let me and my spouse both experience all of the intimacy and pleasure you intended a man and woman to enjoy in marriage. I pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen!

I could report many, many stories of stunning redemption that have come as a result of individuals and couples praying through this type of prayer. Now remember – sometimes the wounds and consequences

take time to heal. You may want to revisit this prayer several times over if lasting healing has not yet taken place. You may recall actions that need confession long after you finish this book. Return to this prayer and confess those at well. Some of you will also benefit from seeing a good Christian counsellor.

Hold fast to these truths:

You, your body, and your sexuality belong to Jesus Christ.

He has completely forgiven you.,

He created your sexuality to be whole and holy.

He created your sexuality to be a source of intimacy and joy

Jesus Christ came to seek and save “what was lost” (Luke 19:10), including all that was lost in blessings he intended through your sexuality!

CHAPTER 13

Integration into the Church

In Malaysia, a Pastor phoned us up for advice as to how to counsel a sexual struggler who was a member of his Church. He said, “Bible College did not prepare me for this type of problem.” Similarly across Asia, Bible Colleges and Seminaries have taught students about theology and how to save souls, but rarely how to counsel sexual strugglers. They seldom address the topic of sexuality. An essential part of Christians overcoming any problem is to be involved in a Church. The Church is central to God’s plan to redeem the world yet often the Church does not know what to do with sexual strugglers.

Problems the Church faces in Helping the Sexual Struggler

1. Churches rarely give any teaching or sermons on sexuality.
2. The church leadership is generally of older men who are very conservative about sexuality therefore sexual strugglers and young people will not talk with them. They think these leaders do not understand about sexual struggles.

When I was talking to a church elder about the ministry of Exodus, it was good that he said, 'Our young people need this ministry'. However, he is mistaken. It is not just young singles who struggle sexually but many married people.

3. The church often does not know how to support, help, and counsel strugglers, neither do they maintain confidentiality.
4. The church often gives the impression that it is there to help the spiritually strong rather than the sexual struggler.
5. As the church has more middle class people and families in it, they get most of the help and support rather than young adults or older single people.

Problems the Struggler faces

1. They see the Church as rigid, legal and family orientated and unable to help them with their problems.
2. The struggler does not know whom to trust with their problems, fearing they will be rejected, misunderstood and even asked to leave the church if they say they have a sexual problem. Sometimes strugglers have to go outside their own church before they have a safe place to talk about their struggles.
3. Young people prefer to talk to those of their own age group about sexuality and sexual struggles but as mentioned, church leadership across Asia is generally of older men.
4. If a woman has sexual struggles or she has concerns for sexual strugglers whom she knows, she has even fewer people to talk with. For example, Anne from Sri Lanka whose husband struggles with homosexuality is on an e-mail wives support group to advise her how to respond to her husband.
5. A woman will often be blamed for being the reason for the sexual problem in the marriage, or at fault if she was sexually assaulted.

Some Ways in which the Church can Reach the Sexual Struggler

A. Teaching on a Biblical Understanding of sexuality is critical.

1. Have a series of talks in church on the Christian response to AIDS, abortion, homosexuality etc.
2. Have someone knowledgeable talk with your leadership on sexuality.
3. Have one church service a year that deals with sexuality. It could be a Sexual and Relational Wholeness Sunday where you can pray and preach about the sexual brokenness of the Nation, the Church and our lives. For example, it could focus in on World AIDS Day, December 1st each year.

B. Make a statement from your pulpit or in your newsletter that your church wants to help sexual strugglers:

“If you suffer with sexual problems, masturbation, pornography, lurid fantasies, adulterous fantasies, sexual addictions, homosexual orientation, we understand, we love you and we can help you. Make an appointment to come and see us. We will not reject you.”

C. Do Evangelism - and you will reach the sexual struggler who needs to hear the message that Jesus died for their sins so they can be forgiven and healed.

D. Start a support group for people with life controlling problems (like an Alcoholics Anonymous group) - based on James 5:16 “confess your sins one to another.”

1. Spiritually it should include prayer, worship and bible teaching.
2. Support group leaders should decide the programme for the group.
3. The group should be a place of confidentiality, acceptance, affirmation and accountability where members can listen and learn together. *(More on this is in point E on the next page).*
4. The group leaders should not counsel in the group meeting. This should be done at another time. Members also should not counsel and advise each other in the meeting. It is better if they talk about how they dealt with their own personal problems.
5. Don't allow any one person to control the meeting by talking too long.
6. If there are problems such as attraction to group members then this should be confessed to the leader. If necessary, establish clear boundaries about relationships. eg members do not meet socially outside the group time
7. If group members are sexually involved with each other, they are usually expelled from the group. They can be given ongoing counselling.

8. If it is a mixed group of men and women then after a time of worship or teaching together, separate to talk in same-sex groups.
9. While women tend to meet and talk together quite naturally, men find this harder to do. However, having an occasional men's only Fellowship breakfast is helpful for strugglers as they can -
 - a. Hear that other men also have needs.
 - b. Realise they are not the only one with problems.
 - c. Develop friendships and social skills.

E. Biblical Principles that help strugglers overcome their problems.

Obviously the person needs to be born again first of all, knowing Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The struggler needs to confess and repent of sin, receive forgiveness and live a life in the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Strugglers have said that other things to help overcome their problems are having:

1. A friend to confide in, pray with, do social things with.
2. A counsellor who gives Biblical counsel how to overcome problems.
3. A support group where they can hear how others are coping with similar problems like overcoming drugs, drink, etc and where they can be:

- Accountable about their sexual behaviour to someone who knows their progress in overcoming their problems.
- Accepted and loved even if they have problems.
- Affirmed as God's people who can overcome their problems.

If there is no such support group available then there are e-mail support groups, home fellowship meetings, etc.

4. A caring church where there are friendly people who will invite them for meals, help them and provide social activities. This is important for singles as they can be very lonely.

A New Zealand woman who was a prostitute before she became a Christian said to us, "I don't remember one sermon I heard but will always remember people who invited me into their home for a drink of tea or for a meal."

Pastoral Care

The church can play a vital role in helping the homosexual and sexual struggler in their healing journey towards sexual and relational wholeness. This can be achieved through: education, care and compassion.

Be educated

To give proper Pastoral care it is important to be educated on the issue of homosexuality, AIDS etc. by attending seminars or reading literature, (there's plenty of material around; if not, there is the Internet).

Be caring

1. Remember that God doesn't require that we judge others but that we love our neighbour as ourselves by:-

- Carrying one another's burdens and problems in life (Galatians 6:2)
- Not making derogatory remarks about homosexuals (eg. Poofter, queer, fags, dyke etc) or other sexual strugglers.

2. Discipleship. Pray with them and study God's word together. Help them to become grounded in Christ (home fellowship group is a good environment for this to happen).

3. Be compassionate and give acceptance, affirmation and accountability. For both male and female strugglers, it's important to be genuinely accepted and affirmed by those of the same sex. This plays a big part in helping to meet legitimate unmet same sex needs in a non-sexual healthy way. As needs are met through genuine acceptance and affirmation the struggler can begin to grow more secure in their masculinity/femininity.

- We can offer affirmation through words of encouragement, hugging, etc.
- Have others to be accountable to which can help them overcome problems. Listening when they need to talk. At times, they may need to discuss their problems with someone and may be seeking prayer.

- If they need to make a confession try not to show feelings of shock about what they confess.
- At times they'll be too embarrassed to initiate talking about their struggles, therefore, occasionally ask how they are doing. (This will mean a lot to them).
- Friendship. It's important to offer genuine friendship and not just "small talk" at the end of the church service or home group. Friendship may include: inviting them to weekend social activities, mid week catch-ups, phone calls, having a meal together, coffee etc. By offering this type of friendship they will know you truly care for them.
- Involvement in the church. This will help them to have a sense of belonging and purpose and will help them to look beyond their own needs.

Why do we need to have such structures for the sexual struggler? One of their problems is that they suffer from shame, which means to feel bad about yourself.

Prayer. Make a commitment to pray for them on a regular basis. They're in a tremendous spiritual battle and need all the prayer they can get. Below is a useful prayer for empowering. In the space put the name of the person you are praying for.

Come Holy Spirit.

I thank you that you are trustworthy. Release _____ from any projection of his fears on to you. Free him/her to receive the power that resurrects life. Take from _____ all the following problems, sins (NAME THEM) that _____ has made with his/her own weaknesses, and help him/her to lay them down. Free _____ to rise up in your power. To receive your Spirit as a refiner's fire, in order to be empowered and rise out of a new centre of strength. That _____ might will to walk according to your will. May _____ receive your spirit as a source of strength and authority that enables him to walk out your will for him. Embolden _____ in power of the Holy Spirit to take authority over sin and sinful patterns. Thank you our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Give _____ the power to therefore honour you with his/her body. In Jesus Name. Amen.

CHAPTER 14

Being A Good Samaritan to the Sexual Struggler

Most readers of the Bible know the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. Briefly, a man was travelling down from Jericho to Jerusalem on a road so dangerous that it was known as the “bloody way”. He was attacked, robbed, beaten and left on the road. A Priest and Levite saw him but did not help him, but a Samaritan, despised by the Jews as their religion was a mixture of Judaism and paganism, helped him.

The sexual struggler is like the wounded man, feeling broken abandoned and helpless. No one knows how long the wounded man lay on the road, but it could

have been a considerable time. From our own experience in counselling we have found that on average women wait 8 years before going for help and men wait 9 years. One woman from Singapore had waited for 30 years before she spoke of her lesbian problem to a Church counsellor. Michael, a 25-year-old student from Indonesia, had waited 15 years before speaking of his homosexual struggle to his Pastor.

When the Priest and the Levite (Luke 10:31) saw the wounded man they did nothing to help, they passed by on the other side. Sadly, the Church, like the Priest and Levite, rather than help the sexual struggler, has often just passed by, ignoring them. Perhaps it is out of fear, wondering what would happen if these people come into the church? Or is it out of denial, believing only the west has these problems, not Asia.

Perhaps the Priest and Levite thought “The wounded man is being punished by God for his sins.” For there is a theology that says, “Bad things only happen to bad people. AIDS is the judgment of God on homosexuals. Prostitutes won’t get into heaven.” Yet scripture says in Romans 3:23, “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 clearly speaks of God’s forgiveness to the sexually immoral.

In Luke 10:33 when the Samaritan goes to help the wounded he took a risk, as it could have been dangerous. The man could be pretending to be wounded and then attack his helpers. Similarly, sexual strugglers

need to take a risk and find someone with whom they can share their problems.

Anne 29, a Malaysian Christian had struggled with sexual feelings for women for many years. Eventually she took a risk and told Wendy, a married woman in her church. Since that time Wendy has been a great friend to Anne by being her spiritual mother to help her overcome her problems.

In a survey of 170 Asian men and 100 Asian women who contacted us for counselling, we asked the question, “What was the most helpful thing in overcoming your sexual struggles?” 65 men and 75 women replied, “Having a friend to talk to.”

Next the Samaritan used Oil and Wine (Luke 10:34), representing the healing ministry of the Holy Spirit, which was poured into the deep wounds of the man to give physical healing. Strugglers need the ministry of the Holy Spirit for healing. There are many deep, emotional wounds such as sexual abuse, rejection, abandonment, fear, etc. that need healing.

Undoubtedly the wounded man is wonderfully delivered from the power of evil. Do sexual strugglers need deliverance ministry? Deliverance refers to prayer that supernaturally and instantaneously breaks the power of Satan in areas such as drink, drugs and sickness in someone’s life. Clearly there are evil spirits in the world.

However, clients who participated in our survey have said deliverance was the most unhelpful part of their

recovery. Why? It seems that their counsellor or pastor thought that one deliverance prayer, with no further ministry of counsel, prayer or pastoral care, would solve all their problems.

This approach fails to recognize that sexual problems are not only spiritual, and might need deliverance ministry, but also emotional and physical and that also need the healing gifts of the Holy Spirit. Healing can take time. A deep cut can take weeks to heal. Similarly deep problems in someone's life can take much time to heal.

The beast (Luke 10:34) used to support the wounded man, represents a support group which encourages those seeking to overcome problems from alcohol, drugs or sex.

A support group can be a wonderful place where the struggler is helped to grow in Christian faith as mentioned in Chapter 11. Alternatively one caring person can give support.

Next, the injured man is taken to an inn where he is looked after. This is symbolic of a caring church where the sexual struggler can be cared for and disciplined as part of their healing journey. This can take time. In fact clients tell us that it takes a number of years before they begin to overcome their life controlling behavioural and emotional problems. Building a sense of strong gender identity can take even longer.

Healing is costly (*Luke 10:35*) The two silver pence that was given to the inn keeper to look after the injured man was about the daily wage for a labourer (Matthew 20:1-16) and was also the price of redemption paid for each Jew (Exodus 30:12-15).

But the Samaritan takes on more responsibility. He says, "I will return."

So we see that helping someone to get healing is time consuming and maybe inconvenient. Maybe, the Samaritan, because he was helping the wounded man, could not do other business that he had planned. Yet this was God's priority.

We don't know if the wounded man was grateful to the Samaritan for his help. Some clients never say "Thank you" either to you or God for the help they receive.

Maybe he never learnt to be careful and went down the Jericho Road again and got injured or killed. Similarly some clients never learn the lesson that sin has consequences and so repeat their sinful behaviour.

We do not know how long it was before the wounded man was better, or if he was ever completely healed. He might have limped for the rest of his life, been blind or had psychological damage as a result of the beating.

Similarly, healing and counselling of sexual strugglers with deep, emotional, behavioural,

psychological needs requires time, maybe even years. Some still might have strong sexual temptations, for many years, even though they are faithfully following Christ. This does not mean Christ is not at work in their lives. Others have sexual mannerisms or dress habits which also take time to change.

What we must understand is that all of us, including the sexual struggler, are in a process of change called sanctification which lasts all our life time. In verse 37, Jesus ends the story with the challenging words “Go and do likewise”. What we must see is that this story stands as a light and an example for what Christian compassion should be towards any in need, which includes the sexual struggler.

While this story shows how we can understand the pain and practically help the sexual struggler, how do you actually share the Gospel with them? What do you say to a loved one who is homosexual or promiscuous? We must look in John 4.

CHAPTER 15

Sharing the Gospel with the Sexual Struggler

Fields ripe for harvesting (John 4:35)

For the 20 years I did evangelism in the gay, (homosexual) street and bar scene in Brisbane, Australia. Without fail I meet someone who is a born-again Christian yet struggling with their sexuality. They lead a double life; respectable Christian on Sundays but at night visiting toilets and bath houses for anonymous sex.

Asia is no different; there are parks, toilets, streets and bars famous for gays. In my travels I have been to parks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where gays cruise (a term meaning looking for sex) to share the gospel with them. They are surprised to see me there. I met Ronny,

a Chinese man, married and from an Anglican background who said, “Why are you here? Church people avoid these places?” He went on to say, “Is there any hope for me to change? Does God love me?”

Perhaps you know someone who is a homosexual, a Lesbian, a prostitute or a sexually immoral neighbour. Or maybe you want to start an outreach to the local red light (place for prostitution) or gay area. How do you share the good news of the Gospel with them? What are the things that you should be aware of?

The story of Jesus and the woman at the well in John 4 gives us the best example of reaching sexual strugglers. She had been married five times and was now living with a man who was not her husband. We read in John 4: 6,7 that she came at the sixth hour, (midday) to the well to get water. This was unusual as most of the women came early morning or in the cool of the evening. Perhaps, even the other local women despised her and rejected her. Interestingly, the town where this story occurred, Sychar (John 4:5) means falsehood, deceit and drunkenness and is often involved with immoral behaviour.

So what lessons can we learn from this story in sharing the Gospel with the sexually immoral?

1. You must have compassion so ask for His heart of love to reach them.

So don't be fearful if they say they are gay, a prostitute or a lesbian. They are in need of a Saviour. See them as a person, whom the Lord Jesus loves, died for and can redeem. We saw the power of the Gospel to redeem the sexual struggler in Chapter 8.

2. In John 4:4 Jesus gives us a good example by actually going to the place where the unreached, unwanted and unloved lived - Samaria, a place considered very bad by Jews (see Chapter 12). They would not even travel there, believing the Samaritans were unclean.

Be prepared to go to these people, as they will often not come to you or your church for help. So you could go to places where they meet: on the streets, in bars where they drink, or where they socialise. Or go to your neighbour who is immoral and has a drink or gambling problem, ask how he is.

Most people, including Christians, are very cautious with whom they talk about their sexual problems. In fact, as we have travelled across Asia and counselled people with sexual struggles, we have found that on average they wait up to ten years before they tell anyone of their problem.

3. Do not think that you need to have a former lifestyle in homosexuality, prostitution, and immorality to share your faith. What you really need is compassion, which is a love for a broken, needy person.

4. Be wise how, where and to whom you share your faith. Don't put yourself in a place of sexual temptation. Know your limitations. Even Jesus was tired and hungry (John 4:6) so He rested.
5. Realise that many sexually immoral people have been deeply hurt by family, friends and religious groups. They are understandably angry with God and the world, so they do not trust anyone. You as a Christian, representing God are often seen as their enemy. You might have to win their trust and respect before they listen to you. Perhaps that is why the woman says in verse 9, "How can you, a Jew, ask water of me (a despised Samaritan woman)?"
6. Do not condemn people for their lifestyle. Only share the Good News of the Gospel. They probably feel condemned already. Jesus first offered her living water (John 4:10,15), as she was thirsty, then later spoke about her unfulfilling, sinful lifestyle (John 4:17).
7. When do you talk about their sinful lifestyle? The wisest thing is when they do! People will admit they are doing wrong things; what they really want to know is how to overcome their problems. We must also be honest and admit that many other people, including religious people, struggle with sexuality. So even though they may be a prostitute, they are not the worst people in Malaysia, Singapore or India! You might want to share what good things God has done for you in the area of your own sexual struggles.
8. If you are asked "Is it possible to change from being sexually immoral?" the answer is "Yes - of course you can," but it will take time and hard work.
9. Be ready for the difficult theological questions (John 4:21). Did God make people homosexual? Does He send people to hell for being sexually immoral? Can they be forgiven? Do not think you have to have all the answers.
10. Be prepared to be misunderstood, criticised by fellow believers who might ask, "Why are you going to those prostitutes or gays, who cannot be forgiven?" They might think you have bad motives (John 4:27).
11. After you have shared your faith, follow-up is vital. Jesus did that by spending a few days with the woman and her friends (John 4:40). Many people are lonely so arranging to have a meal or a cup of tea with them can be helpful. Visit them and be prepared to be their friend, even if they don't respond to the Gospel.

We must never forget in a world that is full of sexually and relationally broken people that the "fields are ripe for harvest." As we go into the world sharing our faith, we will meet those who are desperate for the Good News of the Gospel. If we are like Jesus, full of compassion, we will reach these people. Some will believe and be saved like the Samaritan woman and her friends (John 4:39). The task is great but not impossible.

CONCLUSION

Where to Now?

We have had quite a journey. First, looking at the sexual revolution in Asia, then broken sexuality generally, what scripture has to say and then how to counsel, support and help those who want to change. We trust the stories of change from sexual problems have encouraged you and given you hope if you have struggles or know of others who do. So where to now?

To resolve this question we must decide what are the specific challenges to be a Christian in the 21st Century? Therefore we need to discern where the world

(in Mark 16:15-18, Matthew 28: 18-20, 2 Peter 3:6, “the world” means the kosmos, the social system) is hurting, broken, bleeding and then bring Christ’s love there.

As we hear their cry and see their pain, our hearts should be awakened like Jesus, who in Matthew 9:35-37 is moved with compassion at the sight of the people because they “fainted”. Compassion means, “moved to action to bring deliverance to the unlawful suffering of the people” and “fainted” means “exhausted, lying down to die.”

The reason for this is sobering. The sheep have fainted, as they are without shepherds, unprotected, and hungry. The shepherds have failed to care for their sheep. It is not hard to apply this truth to the present response of the Asian Church leadership to sexuality. Truly the people of God are without shepherds to teach them about sexuality. There is no one to meet their needs.

Thus, the whole emphasis of this book has been to explain one area where both the world and the Church are hurting. It is in the area of sexuality. It is not only a crisis and challenge for the Church, but also an opportunity. It is not “by chance,” (Luke 10:33) or accident that the Church faces, willingly or unwillingly, these issues. It is by Divine Appointment and calling. For “by chance” means natural occurrences in life that are overruled by God! What is more natural in life than love, relationships and intimacy? Or to feel loved, wanted and secure? This is all part of our sexuality, being male or female, made in the Image of God.

Yet the image is broken and needs Divine overruling and intervention to be restored.

Therefore, the Church must see ministry to the sexually and relationally broken as a new frontier of mission. To do this it must address the issue of sexuality within the Church.

In the light of the great commission in Matthew 28: 18-20 and Mark 16: 15-18 and the world’s present problems with sexuality, church leadership and laymen must become more responsible and redemptive in addressing sexual brokenness. In so doing, we give to those in sexual and relational brokenness both the courage to face the truth and the hope of change. No longer do they have to cry out, “How long oh Lord, how long before my pain ends?”

To do this, then the Church must begin to equip and educate herself to fulfil these tasks. So it is in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 15) mentioned in chapter 12, that we have the direction for the way forward.

Where to now if you know someone with a need? Be a Samaritan and reach out to them in Christ-like compassion. By showing you care and helping someone you can make a difference in their life.

Where to now if you are in a church or ministry trying to reach, or wanting to reach, sexual strugglers? Start outreach and evangelism programmes and you will reach sexual strugglers. Then provide a church of

compassion and rest for the sexually and emotionally wounded.

Where to now if you have a problem with your sexuality? We are not just referring to sin but also where you have been sinned against. Then do something about it, today! It will take courage and trust but not to act only makes the problem worse.

If you do not have someone that you can personally talk to or trust with your need then there are help lines and e-mail contacts listed at the back of the book. Contact them today!

There are many challenges for the Church in the 21st century. It is vital that one is to have a redemptive message of sexuality for women. When you consider the particular problems women face worldwide of :

1. Illiteracy: on average 70% of women are illiterate
2. Physical survival: 65% are undernourished.
3. Poverty: 45% live below the poverty line.
4. Disease: 50% of those living with HIV are women.

These facts show that ministry to women is vital. One Fijian Pastor said, "If you reach the women, you reach the homes and then you change the Nation."

Therefore the church in Asia must reach out to empower women, to educate them, to see them as equals in the church and society. As the church in Asia is

generally a minority and often weak financially and politically, it might not be able to improve the role of women in Asian society but it can certainly see that women are honoured in the Body of Christ.

It will take courage and trust, but not to act only makes the problem worse. "Male and female, He created them. . .and behold it was very good." (Genesis 1: 27, 31).

Finally never, never give up the hope of change in your own life or in the life of someone else. The captives can be set free (Luke 4:18).

A P P E N D I C E S

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Page 35, Stream of Sexuality from Dr Bill Consiglio's book, "Homosexual No More."

Page 40, Frank Worthen, Director of New Hope Ministries, USA, article on "What is Homosexuality"

Page 42, Frank Worthen, Director of New Hope Ministries, USA, for article on "The Four Components of Homosexuality"

Page 74, Ron Brookman, Living Waters, Australia, for article "Our tendency Towards Sexual Addiction"

Page 86, Bob Davies, former director of Exodus North America, article on “Masturbation”

Sy Rogers for information in following chapters:

Reasons Why Christians will have Sexual Struggles, Ch 2, Page 29f

The History of Sexual Redemption in the Bible, Ch 9, Page 121f

Recovery, Realistic Expectations Ch 10, Page 127f

Page 143, Prayer for Sexual Healing, by John Eldridge of Ransomed Heart ministries, from his book “Wild at Heart”. Used with kind permission.

Endnote:

The church refers to the local church

HIV / AIDS

The Church refers to the Universal Church

On March 15th 2002, Indian Health and Family Welfare Minister C.P Thakur said that HIV/AIDS is the “most serious health problem in India.” With nearly four million HIV cases reported and another 23 infections estimated to occur every minute he was correct. Experts warned that without an AIDS vaccine, the progression of HIV/AIDS would only worsen because AIDS drugs are too expensive for most Indians.

Now in 2005 there are over 4 million people in India with HIV/ AIDS. This is about 10% of the worlds HIV/ AIDS population.

What is HIV?

HIV means Human Immune deficiency Virus. This virus attacks the immune system of our body, which defends us against disease. As a result the person can get diseases such as cancer or pneumonia.

What is AIDS?

AIDS means Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. A person is said to have AIDS when the body is so weakened by HIV that several other illnesses develop such as cancers or pneumonia.

The human body acquires or gets HIV from:

1. SEX - having anal or vaginal intercourse with a partner infected with HIV.
2. DRUGS - by using the same needle for drugs as those infected with HIV.
3. TRANSFUSION of HIV contaminated blood and blood products and passing BODY FLUIDS during sexual activity from one person with HIV to the other person.
4. HIV positive pregnant mother passes it on to her baby.

Being immoral, that is having sex outside of marriage, increases the risk of getting HIV.

The virus then slowly attacks and destroys the body's immune system that is there to protect it from disease. This results in deficiency or loss of CD4 cells so the body is attacked by infections and life threatening diseases (syndrome) like tuberculosis, pneumonia, fever and diarrhea.

This final stage is called AIDS. Some people take many years to die from AIDS others die quickly.

After the HIV virus enters the body it can take between 2-20 years until the start of the AIDS. However, for many people in Asia, who do not have medicines or money to fight HIV, then AIDS develops quickly.

HIV is not spread through:-

1. Mosquitoes and other insects.
2. Social contacts such as working in the same office, traveling together.
3. Coughing, sneezing or shaking hands.
4. Sharing of food, plates, or toilets.
5. Kissing and hugging.

Prevention

The only safe way to prevent getting HIV via sexual contact is to be sexually faithful to your married partner, or if you are single to be celibate, (not having sex with anyone).

Having many sexual partners increases the risk of getting infected with HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases, known as STD's, such as syphilis or gonorrhea.

Even using condoms for what is called "safe sex" is not 100% safe. Condoms break and so the HIV virus can be passed on.

How do you know if you have HIV?

A blood test will show if you have it. The virus appears in your body 3 months after you have been infected. In those 3 months, signs that you have HIV include – fevers in the night, sudden loss of weight and swollen lymph glands in the neck, armpit or groin. Then the fevers stop.

Most people in India get HIV through vaginal intercourse and 23% of them are women. Usually the woman is the wife of a husband who has HIV. He has HIV because he has been sexually unfaithful to her.

Nimrit is one of these women. She got HIV from her husband Mohan. Even though they were both Christians and married, Mohan was sexually immoral. He had sex with a prostitute who was infected with HIV

and got the virus from her. Then when he had sexual relationships with Nimrit he passed it on to her. Fortunately, their baby son, born after Mohan got the virus, does not have HIV. Mohan repented of his sin and knows forgiveness and cleansing from God. Nimrit also forgives him. Yet sadly the consequences of his sin have still affected both Mohan and Nimrit. Now they both have HIV. At times they are sick. When they need medicine they get it from a local hospital.

Most of the time their health has been good as they are eating healthy foods and not getting too tired. Yet later they both could get very sick and die leaving their children as orphans. Only their Pastor knows of the problem and he is being very helpful to them. At the moment they both want to start a Church so Mohan is doing some Pastoral Training in a Bible College. They are trusting God to keep them healthy.

Questions for Individual/Groups

Read 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11. Consider:

Are all these sins equally bad?

What is the right response to each of these sins?

Look at these passages Genesis 2:18-25; Leviticus 18:22-24; and 20:13 (read a few surrounding verses for context); Romans 1:18-82.

And for each passage answer:

- What do we learn about sexual relations?
- What reasons are there for not having homosexual or extra-marital sex?
- Does anyone in your church know that you struggle with a sexual problem such as homosexuality, sex addiction ?
- Have you blamed your church for not understanding you?
- Have you asked for help? Were you too fearful?
- Do others seem to expect instant change? How do you respond?

- In looking back a week, month, year, what changes do you see taking place in your life?
- Describe your relationship with your father and mother.
- Describe your relationship with your brothers and sisters.
- Describe your relationship with your peer group.
- Was your view of the opposite sex or same sex damaged in early life? How?
- Did you have a love/hate relationship with your same-sex parent? Do you still?
- Describe a good same-sex friendship that had no sexual involvement.
- Are you committed to any church or are you not involved in any church?
- Are you accountable to other Christians? How? How often?

Practical Help

Websites for Youth:

<http://freetobeme.com>

<http://exodusyouth.net>

<http://www.becomingreal.org>

Website to help overcome Pornography: <http://www.wholeperson-counseling.org/sexual/sexual-issues.html> of search for “overcoming pornography addiction”.

Here are some practical tips to keep your way pure sexually if you are tempted with pornography or immorality. On a card write the following to be read when you are sexually tempted. This way you can “flee temptation and keep your body holy” (1 Corinthians 6:18).

Sexual Temptation

- What’s happening to me now?
- What will this lead to?
- How will it make me feel afterwards?
- What will be the consequences if I do this?
- What do I really feel or need right now?

- How can I address that feeling or that need faithfully in a Biblical way?
- How can God help me?
- His Promises are (write some scriptures e.g. Hebrews 13).

On back of card write:

List of consequences if you sin to your-

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Family | 5. Self Image |
| 2. Job | 6. Future |
| 3. Health | 7. Relationship with the Lord |
| 4. Reputation | |

What will be the benefits if you don’t sin to your

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Family | 5. Self Image |
| 2. Job | 6. Future |
| 3. Health | 7. Relationship with the Lord |
| 4. Reputation | |

What happens if we have committed sexual sin? There is good news. You can be forgiven as God forgives the repentant sexual sinners: Rahab the prostitute

(Joshua 2-6), King David the adulterer (2 Samuel 11,12, Psalm 51), the adulterous woman (John 8).

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 tells us we can be:

- Washed by the blood of Jesus and forgiven for every sin (also 1 John 1:8)
- Sanctified and cleansed by His Holy Spirit
- Justified by faith in the work of the Cross.

James 5:14 -16

Be accountable to someone, who knows all your struggles and failures.

Confess your sin to them and let them help you overcome this problem.

Valuing Your Sexuality

Psalm 139:13 tells us, “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.” What does this mean to you about who you are?

.....

Are you a mistake?

Did God create you as a man/woman?

.....

What does it mean to you to acknowledge that you are who you are by God’s design, blessing and purpose of reflecting Him?.....

.....

.....

Psalm 139:14 says, “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” How have you given thanks to God for His handiwork or who you are? How will you begin? What about yourself are you willing to begin giving thanks to God for?

.....

.....

Psalm 139:17 identifies, “How precious are your thoughts to me, O God!” With ears that are willing to hear from

Him, what are His precious thoughts over you and your manhood/womanhood?

.....
.....
.....

In Genesis 1:27 “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.” And In Genesis 1:31 “God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good.” God’s pronouncement of “good” contains numerous qualifiers of what God was saying: beautiful, best, bountiful, cheerful, at ease, (be in) favour, fine, glad, graciously, joyful, kindly, kindness, likes (best), loving, merry X most, pleasant, pleases, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare, (be) well (favoured). Using those words to form simple statements, what do you hear God saying to you about you? Example: He says I am beautiful... I will begin to accept my own personal beauty. You might continue on more paper of your own!

.....

For women: what does it mean to you that you were “fashioned” by God?

.....

For men: what does it mean that women were “fashioned by God?

.....

Most Frequently asked Questions

- Q. How is sexuality related to God?
- A. God created sex and gave us biological urges. As He is the God of life we will also want to give life.

- Q. Can you be both a spiritual person and a person with sexual drive?
- A. Yes. Spirituality and sexuality are friends not enemies. Sexuality is part of your humanity. So is spirituality. Jesus was perfect Man and perfect God. Since Jesus had sexuality, He had all the needs and desires of any man yet did not sin and never married but remained celibate. We must put our sexual urges and needs under the control of the Holy Spirit.

- Q. Is sex holy or unholy?
- A. According to the Bible sex is a good gift from God to be used only between husband and wife. Genesis 1:31. There is nothing wrong, sinful, unholy, dirty or unnatural about sex if used within marriage. Sex can be for procreation /babies and for pleasure. Read

Hebrews 13: 5, Song of Solomon. The body is good. However, sex like everything else in the world has been affected by sin.

Q. What does the Bible say about Masturbation?

A. Most versions of the Bible do not mention the word masturbation but according to some Tamil people, their Bible in 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11 forbids masturbation.

Q. Is masturbation sinful?

A. The Bible clearly speaks against immorality, adultery, and homosexuality - which are all violations of the male/female, husband /wife sexual relationship but does not clearly say that masturbation is sinful. However, as sex is meant to be in a marriage, then masturbation is not God's perfect plan. Masturbation is sex with yourself and involves sexual fantasy which is often sinful. So masturbation is often an unhelpful habit that has to be overcome. Clearly the lustful thoughts often associated with masturbation are sinful.

It is certainly better to masturbate than be sexually immoral. But there is an even better way: self-control. See Chapter 6 of the book for more information on this.

Q. How do you control masturbation?

A. Most men and even some women have struggled with masturbation especially when they were teenagers. For most teenagers sex desires are strong and need to be controlled. It is important not to look at pornography on the internet or movies. Healthy exercise for the body will also help. Too many hours in front of a computer is going to make you unhealthy.

Many unmarried adults still struggle with masturbation and they should learn how to control it.

Q. Is oral and anal sex wrong?

A. The Bible does not mention everything about sex. It does not talk about sexual technique, sexual practices or how often you should have sex. However, common sense about health and how the body is made, tells you what parts of the body are meant for sex. Ultimately, a husband and wife must decide what they think is right for themselves and what is pleasing to God. There should not be force on someone to "experiment" sexually or to say "If you love me you would do this."

Q. How often should a married couple have sex?

A. This is for the couple to decide. There should be no force put on a partner to have sex.

Q. What is a normal sexual position?

A. This is for the couple to decide

Q. Is attraction to the opposite sex sinful?"

A. No. God made us that way. Read Genesis 2: 23 where Adam is attracted to Eve, or read the Song of Solomon where the two lovers are attracted to each other. Being attracted to someone really means there is something about them that draws you to the person. It might be a physical attraction - their smile, physique or a lively personality. Sometimes attraction can be sexual. This is not sinful but it could become a problem if it is not the person that you are married to and can turn to lust. (Read 2 Samuel 11). So we have to control our thoughts and our actions.

Q. I am not attracted to the opposite sex? Is there something wrong with me?

A. No. You could have other things more interesting or more important in your life at this time, like study, a career or sport. We also need to understand that we do not all mature sexually at the same time or at the same age. For some it is when they are younger and for others when they are older. For some it does not happen, but that is not a problem.

However, if you have a deep dislike for /or fear of the opposite sex there could be a problem that needs to be looked at.

Q. I was sexually abused as a child. Am I to blame?

A. No. An adult who has sex with a child is always the culprit. Or even if an adult sexually abuses another adult then the abuser is always at fault.

Q. I have committed a sexual sin. Can God forgive me?

A. Yes. The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. Read I John 1: 7, 8, 1 Corinthians 6: 9 –11.

Q. Should I marry a virgin?

A. It is God's plan that we are virgins when we marry. However, this is not always the case. We should make a distinction between whether the person was a Christian or a non-Christian at the time of sexual intercourse. Was the girl raped or sexually abused? Read story of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13 who was not to blame for losing her virginity but unfairly suffered because of this. Ultimately it is up to you to pray and ask God if He wants you to only marry a virgin.

Q. Should I marry someone who has committed adultery /immorality?

A. Again we must ask were they a Christian or non-Christian at the time? Ultimately it is up to you to decide before God who you want to marry.

Q. Should we have sex when my wife is pregnant? If not, for how long?

A. You can have sex, but first the wife should be happy about this and make sure there is no medical reason not to have sex. Possibly in later stages of pregnancy it is not advisable. The Bible says for the husband to love the wife and consider her. Ephesians 5: 22 – 32.

Q. Will an adulterous person or a homosexual go to hell?

A. These are serious sins and can put us in great spiritual danger. Any sin, of which we are unrepentant, can cause great problems in our life and lives of others. However if we repent, God will forgive us. Read I Cor 6: 9-11. Ps 51.

The basis of going to hell is the rejection of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour not what sexuality we have. “He that has the Son has life; he that does not have the Son does not have life.” John 3: 36, 1 John 5: 12

In fact, many ‘straight’ people will be in hell. If the percentage of the world-wide homosexual population is around 2- 4% then 96% are not homosexual or ‘straight’ which means there will be more straight people in hell than homosexuals or lesbians.

It is also a very different situation for some who is trying, but failing to overcome sexual sins, to someone who does not care about their sexual sins.

Q. Can a person be homosexual/gay and a born again Christian?

A. Yes, just as much as a person can be an alcoholic and yet born again. The key thing is to identify yourself, not in the problem, but as a new person in Christ who wishes to be His disciple. Then as the person follows Jesus “old things” such as immorality or drunkenness are “put off”.

About

“On Eagles Wings to Asia”

Since 2001 On Eagles Wings to Asia, has been helping men and women find a way out of sexual and relational brokenness. It is a ministry of Exodus Asia Pacific (www.exodusasiapacific.org) which is a member of the world-wide Exodus Global Alliance. (www.exodusglobalalliance.org)

This road to freedom is a long journey, often filled with confusion, frustration, and temptation. Yet God's love, grace and mercy is upon all who call upon Him

Without support, most people would not make it. But there are Exodus ministries all over the world which offer experience, understanding and encouragement so desperately needed by those seeking to allow God to control their sexuality. (Gal. 5:22)

Our purpose is to see God's intent for sexuality honoured in the lives of those seeking our help.

People develop maturity through their ongoing submission to the Lordship of Christ and His inspired, authoritative Word and through fellowship within a church body of supportive Christians.

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