

## A Few Thoughts on Sexual Sin

### *Part 1*

Pornography and Sexual Addiction are prevalent problems in the church today. It seems everywhere you turn someone is losing their job, marriage and even their family due to this epidemic. In this article I would like to define sexual sin and addiction, while highlighting a few basic underlying factors that contribute to this malady in our culture. Sexual sin is any violation or omission of God's prescribed pattern of sexuality outlined in Scripture. In its most basic form, sexual addiction (the most common term used in our culture) is compulsive sexual thoughts, and/or demonstrating compulsive sexual behaviors, that deviate from God's intended model of biblical sexuality. Apart from authentic, intimate relationships, sexual sin is an artificial way to find intimacy and connection. Addiction to pornography and sex is an inherently **relational** disorder.

A basic understanding of addiction recognizes that one of the contributing factors is isolation. God's Word says "it is not good for man to be alone." This struggle may look different in each individual, but essentially it means that most that battle with this destructive phenomenon are disconnected relationally. Typically they have few or no friends, and are often described as "staying to themselves." In masculine circles it is deemed uncool or effeminate to have close male friends; but in my therapy, I have made this an indispensable component of healing. They need to know that they are not alone, and there is a band of brothers willing to collectively pursue the wisdom given to us. The apostle Paul, in 2 Timothy 2:22 tells us, "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith and those who call on God out of a pure heart."

Not only is isolation a symptom of sexual sin, guilt and shame are also destructive components that compel our brothers into this destructive cycle. Guilt is represented by the idea “I have done something bad,” whereas shame is the idea “I am something bad.” Guilt is an issue of “doing” and shame is an issue of “being”. Guilt is easier to deal with than shame. With shame, people feel defective at the core of their being.

All men who struggle with sexual sin have shame as an essential issue that must be addressed. We can help the miserable experience wholeness by accepting their identity as a son of God. There is grace, mercy, and the forgiveness of sins if we join God’s family for the first time, or rejoin fellowship through confession and repentance. This is a process to be sure, but we were created to be holy and function within relational parameters established by our Creator. When we function outside His parameters, we inevitably experience the consequences of perverting God’s best. We have impaired relationships, lack peace and joy, when we selfishly use sex in a manner that deviates from God’s design. It is important to understand that “addictive” sex is a distorted attempt to cover shame – while only deepening it. Sexual sin must be addressed in context of relationship where we can be loved at the very core of our being.

Another issue that drives the cycle of sexual sin is failure to deal with relational pain in a healthy way. Those who avoid healthy ways to deal with rejection, hurt, or betrayal have difficulty appropriately expressing emotions like fear, anger, sadness, or disappointment. Men who stuff emotions, feel unworthy or isolated, are at risk. They use pornographic images to anesthetize their pain. The Body of Christ needs to be a safe place for those who struggle with sexual sin. The Church must balance grace and confrontation in such a manner that it leads to repentance and restoration. However, the Church must first

acknowledge that over 50% of the men in their congregations are engaged in some form of sexual sin. We cannot heal it if we are unwilling to admit that it exists.

It has been said that, “the young man who rings the door at the brothel is unconsciously looking for God”. The same can be said of those in our culture who pursue sex and pornography. My hope and prayer is that the Church begins dealing with these issues as Jesus did. He dealt with what was transpiring in the “Heart,” not merely behavior. Sexual sin is an attempt to connect in a distorted way. May the Church be a safe place where those who are broken and hurting can come and kneel at the feet of Jesus with others to receive healing and restoration.

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