

# GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND THE CHURCH

Timothy Geiger, MDiv

Introduction: Three stories (Seth, Alana, and Randy)

## A. Initial Considerations

1. Definitions:
  - a. Sex: Physical sexual activity leading to orgasm, either by oneself, or with another
  - b. Sexuality: The manner in which one uses his or her sexual desire to attract and engage with the sexual or emotional desire of another in order to achieve or heighten sexual arousal
  - c. Gender: The gendered identity of one of God's image-bearers, which is consistent with that individual's birth sex. One's gender is either male or female, in accord with Scripture (Genesis 1:27).
2. The sin nature and its effects
  - a. Everything is corrupted by the effects of sin.
    - 1) The heart and mind: Ephesians 4:17–18
    - 2) The will: John 8:34
    - 3) The body: Romans 8:10
    - 4) Our desires: Romans 3:10–12
  - b. Our experiences of sex, sexuality, and gender have also been corrupted by the effects of sin.
    - 1) Our own sinful acts
    - 2) The ways in which we cultivate sinful worldviews
    - 3) The sin of others against us
    - 4) The progressively corrosive effect of living in a fallen world

## B. The Church Needs to Talk About Sex, Sexuality, and Gender

1. The Church needs to be reactive to the sin and sinful attitudes among her members.
  - a. Sexual sin is nothing new for the Church.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:13
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 5–7
    - 3) Alarming statistics

- 4) The awareness of sexual and gender-related sin already present in the Church is an opportunity to call believing men, women, and children to repentance, hope and healing in Christ.
2. The Church needs to be proactive in teaching her members about these areas of temptation and struggle for so many in her midst.
  - a. Help your members develop biblical worldviews about sex, sexuality and gender.
    - 1) Teach God's design for sex, sexuality and gender vs. worldly views.
    - 2) Talk about typical ways in which God's people struggle.
    - 3) Talk about grace-based repentance.
    - 4) Cultivate and offer gracious accountability.

### C. Common Obstacles to Sexual and Gender Strugglers in the Church

1. Shame and guilt
2. Fear of exposure and judgment
3. Culture of deception and self-deception
4. "I'm the only one. No other Christian struggles with this."
5. "Real Christians don't struggle with this."
6. Prior, unsuccessful attempts at change
7. Misunderstanding of the real problem

### D. The Real Problem

1. The "sin behind the sin:" idolatry
  - a. Matthew 15:18–20
  - b. Luke 6:43–45



2. Sexual sin (or any sin pattern) becomes a counterfeit resolution to any of the desires identified above. It can provide the momentary appearance of what the heart desires...but in the end, it only leaves the sinner emptier and more desperate.
3. The tempting people and influences one encounters only offer a pleasing means to satisfy the desires of one's heart.
  - James 1:13–15: *Each person when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*

## E. The Biblical Answer to Idolatry: Repentance

1. Genuine repentance is different from behavioral modification.
2. Genuine repentance has a twofold focus.
  - a. Fear the Lord
  - b. Flee from sin
3. Genuine repentance must include both concepts, or it isn't genuine repentance.
4. Genuine repentance is lifelong (also known as sanctification).
5. Genuine repentance may include temporary falls back into sin.
6. Genuine repentance requires authentic community within the Church.
  - a. Ephesians 4:11–16
  - b. Galatians 6:1–2
7. Genuine repentance requires a thorough understanding of grace.
  - Titus 3:4–7

## F. Steps toward Helping Believers Walk in Increasing Faith and Repentance

1. Help them develop a theological understanding of grace through preaching, teaching, and counseling.
  - Grace is given only to sinners—Hebrews 10:14–25.
2. Help them develop a practical understanding of grace through preaching, teaching and counseling.
  - Grace is meant to deepen our affection for God and our obedience to his will—Ephesians 2:4–10.

3. Help them through discipleship.
  - a. The difference between head-level discipleship and heart-level discipleship
  - b. Help them answer this question: “What difference does the Person and work of Jesus Christ make for me in the particular ways in which I struggle with unbelief and idolatry?”
  - c. Create a framework for authentic, heart-level discipleship in your church.
4. Help them through modeling and expecting transparency.
  - Living openly and in the light of community, not attempting to deceive others in any way
5. Help them through modeling and expecting proactive accountability.
  - a. Being honest not only about what I have done, but what I want to do.
    - 1) What are the idols that are controlling my heart, and my thoughts and desires today?
    - 2) In which particular ways am I making room in my life for sin today?
    - 3) In which particular ways do I need to be severe in cutting off the means to sin in my life today?
    - 4) In which particular ways am I consciously denying the sovereignty of God today?
    - 5) In which particular ways am I refusing to submit myself to the ordinary means of grace for help in my struggle against sin today?

## **G. Steps toward Engaging LGBTQ+ Unbelievers and Their Allies**

1. Speak the truth in love.
2. Build relationship: let your relationship be a canvas on which the Spirit will communicate the Gospel.
3. Demonstrate mercy and compassion.
4. Let the Spirit lead them to wonder: “What kind of a God does this person serve, who leads them to love me so well?”

## **H. Conclusion**

1. This is not a simple or risk-free ministry.
2. The Lord will change your own heart, as well.
3. Prayerfully prepare a place for Seth, Alana, and Randy.

## I. Recommended Resources

Geiger, Tim, *Your Child Says, "I'm Gay"* (Greensboro: New Growth, 2013).

White, David, *Can You Change If You're Gay?* (Greensboro: New Growth, 2013).

Pinson, Cooper, *Helping Students with Same-Sex Attraction* (Greensboro: New Growth, 2013).

Allberry, Sam, *Is God Anti-gay?* (The Good Book Company, 2015).

Andreades, Sam, *enGendered* (Wooster, OH: Weaver, 2015).

Welch, Edward T., *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015).

Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* (Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant, 2014).

Wilson, Todd, *Mere Sexuality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017).

Powlison, David, *Making All Things New: Restoring Joy to the Sexually Broken* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017).

Tripp, Paul David, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2002).

# WALKING IN FAITH AND REPENTANCE

Timothy Geiger, MDiv

Introduction: One man's story

## A. Is Authentic Change Possible?

1. Cultural definitions of change
  - a. Desire change
  - b. Orientation change
  - c. Lifestyle change
  - d. Affections change
2. Scripture's definition of change
  - a. Heart change...
    - Ezekiel 11:19–20
  - b. ...leading to behavioral change...
    - Romans 12:1–2
  - c. ...resulting in orientation change
    - 2 Corinthians 5:14–17
  - d. Ongoing, progressive heart change wedded to ongoing, progressive behavioral change is called repentance.
    - Romans 2:4
3. Some take-aways from these insights into repentance
  - a. Behavioral change is distinct from heart change.
  - b. Heart change always precedes authentic behavioral change.
  - c. The focus of repentance can't be merely behavioral.
  - d. Authentic repentance must be rooted in the struggler growing in his or her self-identification as one united to Christ by grace, through faith.
  - e. Repentance is rooted in discipleship, which necessarily involves community in the Church.

## B. What Does Authentic Repentance Look Like?

1. Authentic repentance is lifelong.
2. Authentic repentance is progressive.
3. Authentic repentance is best observed by trends.
4. Authentic repentance must involve community.
  - a. Hebrews 3:12–13
  - b. Galatians 6:1–2
  - c. James 5:13–20
5. Authentic repentance must help the struggler answer the question: “What difference does the Person and Work of Jesus Christ make for me in the particular ways in which I struggle with unbelief and idolatry?”



6. Authentic repentance is accomplished progressively through three modes:
  - a. Discipleship
  - b. Living transparently in community
  - c. Proactive accountability

## C. What Is the Church's Role in Cultivating Authentic Repentance?

1. Practice prayer and fasting.
2. Love the members and attenders of the Church well.
3. Be careful how you speak about same-sex behavior and gender dysphoria.
  - Colossians 4:5–6

4. Welcome willing strugglers into authentic community.
5. Speak the truth in love, emphasizing God's grace in salvation and sanctification.
  - Ephesians 2:8–10
6. Provide opportunities for discipleship.
  - a. Be prayerful
  - b. Be proactive
  - c. Be practical

#### **D. What Is the Struggler's Role in Living Out Authentic Repentance?**

1. Prayer and fasting
2. A commitment to radical transparency
3. A commitment to radical humility
4. A commitment to discipleship
5. An increasing focus on others, not on oneself
6. Cutting off the means to sin
7. Cutting off relationships and exposure to triggering situations and places



# TRANSGENDERISM AND THE CHURCH

John D. Street, DMin

## A. The Culture of the Self-Defining Self

## B. Seven Principles of Hope and Change for the Transgender

1. The Christian's ultimate goal is not to convince a person to accept heterosexuality or biological identity, but it is to help them know Jesus Christ and His Gospel.
2. The body is not the prison of the soul so that your goal becomes to escape the body.
3. You must help them reject the ungodly notion that the highest good of life is driven by the moral imperative to be true to oneself.
4. You must help them reject the cultural presumption of the "self-defining self" and learn to be grateful for the way God has created their body.
5. You must help them be fully committed to the truth that their given biological gender-identity and heterosexual orientation glorifies God.
6. Binary gender distinctiveness models an even greater spiritual reality that must not be lost with the culture of the self-defining self.
7. When you fail to follow God's truth, it results in incalculable human suffering and personal misery.

# KILLING SIN HABITS

Mortifying Our Sin with Radical Faith

Stuart Scott, DMin

## Introduction

### A. Sin and the Battle (Gen. 3:1ff; 2 Cor. 10:3-6; Gal. 5:16-24; Eph. 6:10-20; James 1:12-15; 4:1-3; 1 Pet. 5:8-11)

1. Sin defined
  - a. In answer to the question, "What is sin?" we could point to 1 John 3:4 "...sin is lawlessness."
  - b. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God."<sup>1</sup>
2. Where it comes from
  - a. Secular view
  - b. Biblical view
3. Where it leads (if not addressed)
  - a. For the unbeliever, it leads to hopeless slavery (a sinful heart not changed.) (Titus 3:3)
  - b. For the believer, there can be temporary entanglement. (Heb. 12:1-2)
  - c. Without mortification and vivification, sinful entanglement becomes like clockwork. (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb.12:11; 2 Pet. 2:14)
4. Exacerbating the battle
  - a. If the person is not saved (Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 3:3)
  - b. Misconceptions about sanctification/growth
    - Appreciate and distinguish Justification and Sanctification but do not separate them. (Gal. 2:20; 1 Tim. 4:7-9; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:28-29)
    - "But now we come to a part of the application of redemption that is a progressive work that continues throughout our earthly lives. It is also a work in which God and man cooperate each playing distinct roles...Sanctification is a progressive work of God and

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<sup>1</sup> The ESV Study Bible expands on the confession, "Sin is anything (whether in thoughts, actions, or attitudes) that does not express or conform to the holy character of God in his moral law," 2530.

man that makes us more and more *free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.*"  
(italics mine)<sup>2</sup>

c. Counterfeits to mortification

1) Some key examples

- Asceticism
- Pietism
- Mysticism
- Quietism (and its offspring – Keswick Theology)
- Antinomianism
- Legalism
- Entire sanctification (Christian perfection)
- Etc.

2) Distinguishing factors

- If sin is not mortified
- If sin is being mortified

## B. The call of God to mortify sin in our lives

1. Scriptures on mortification<sup>3</sup>

*"So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Romans 8:12–13*

2. Mortification defined

*A discipline of grace whereby a Christian pursuing purity (holiness) and resting on Christ's finished work on the Cross — **aggressively** strives against sin/the manifestations of the Flesh in his life and thus weakens it so that its power and predominance is subdued and practically destroyed while at the same time **aggressively** strives towards a growing faith in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Other passages on killing sin: Matt. 5:29–30; Rom. 6–8; Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 9:27; Eph. 4:22–24; Col 3:1ff; Titus 2:11–14

<sup>4</sup> Taken from *Killing Sin Habits*, Stuart and Zondra Scott, p. 55.

3. An indispensable need for God's glory and our eternal good.<sup>5</sup>

## C. It is really a call to *vivify*.

### 1. Vivify defined

*"Vivify means to endue with life, or to quicken. It is about bringing to life or making something more effective or perhaps effective in a new way."*<sup>6</sup>

2. Vivification of what's missing is critical (we are not just trying to stop a sinful habit).
3. We must vivify Christ, the Gospel and Faith in our lives (cultivating our relationship with Christ and growing in our faith).
  - a. Vivify True Worship of Christ alone — The One of surpassing value (Jer. 2:13; 2 Cor. 11:3)<sup>7</sup>
    - The radical love of Christ will breed radical love and worship.
    - False worship must be replaced with true worship of our God.
    - There is a progression (Know and Understand God, Fear God, Love God—leads to trust and obey with delight).



<sup>5</sup> A list of over twenty ways we glorify God is found in the MacArthur Bible Commentary, 1518.

<sup>6</sup> "It is not just about doing something, it is about being something or personally embracing something from the inside out — for the glory it brings to God and the eternal kind of life it brings to us." *Killing Sin Habits*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> John Calvin begins this way in his book, *The Christian Institutes*. 37–39. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989.

## b. Vivify the Gospel truths of Christ daily

- The power of Christ in us
- Other gospel realities/truths we need to habitually look to (from His forgiveness, to who we are in Christ, to our hope of Heaven)
- All the promises and realities in God and the Gospel should have an impact on what we are doing and what we are thinking. (2 Pet. 1:3–4).<sup>8</sup>

## c. Vivify the exercise of our faith in trials and in the battle.

- Make active faith at crucial times (trial, temptation, and sin).
- Choosing to be a person of faith at times of temptation will grow your faith and make a fundamental difference in your ability to resist and mortify sin.
- Real faith in the One True God:
  - “...is the life-dominating conviction *and practice* that all God has for me through obedience *to His revealed Word* is better by far than anything Satan, *my flesh or the World*, can offer me through *my* selfishness and sin.” *The Obedience Factor*, D. Hegg, 28, adapted (words in italics are mine)
  - “Faith is the one attitude of heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves.” Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 730
  - “Therefore, although it is true that *initial* saving faith and *initial* repentance occur only once in our lives, and when they occur, they constitute true conversion, nevertheless, the heart attitudes of repentance and faith only begin at conversion. These same attitudes *should continue throughout the course of our Christian lives*. Each day there should be heartfelt repentance for sins that we have committed, and faith in Christ to provide for our needs and to empower us to live the Christian life.” (italics mine)<sup>9</sup>

## d. Vivify walking in (by) the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16; Gal. 5:16). All believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. The question is how much influence does He have with His Word in our daily lives? And are we going in His direction?

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<sup>8</sup> Some of these realities for the believer are: Christ is the maker and Lord of all creation and the fountain of living water; I am forgiven and have an advocate; I am eternally justified and adopted through Christ’s substitutionary death; I am indwelt with all the power of the Holy Spirit in Christ, because of the Cross; By faith in Christ’s work on the cross, I died with Christ and died to the power of sin and was raised with Christ to walk in newness of life; I am set by God on a sure path of being conformed into the image of Christ, though I will stumble, I will not utterly fall; My old life has passed away and I’m a new person in Christ — becoming who I am positionally; I am united with Christ; I am bought by the Lord at a great cost; God is working all things for my eternal good and His glory; Jesus is coming back and it’s nearer now than when I first believed. — More expansion of these are on pgs. 19–26, *Killing Sin Habits*.

<sup>9</sup> Grudem, 717

- Letting God's Word dwell in you richly (Col. 3:16)
  - Pursuing Scripture-filled, Christ-centered relationships with other believers
  - Seeking to serve an ever-present Christ and His interests with thankfulness
  - Desperately depending on His power through prayer, rather than on your own strength.
- e. Vivify a focus on specific righteous alternatives to your sin (Eph. 4:22–32; Col. 3:1–17).
- Value and aggressively pursue the Christlike, corresponding characteristic to whatever you are dealing with will make an effective difference in mortifying your sin.<sup>10</sup>

## D. Where the “rubber meets the road”

1. Personal hindrances
  - a. If Unsaved (Rom. 8:8; Matt. 15:8)
  - b. Laziness (Rom. 12:11; 2 Pet. 1:5)
  - c. Apathy (Zeph. 1:12; Rom. 12:11)
  - d. Treasuring secret sin(s) (Ps. 66:18)
  - e. Weariness (Gal. 6:9)
  - f. Ignorance of theology (Eph. 5:6, 15, 17; Col. 2:8) – God, Man, Sin, Salvation, Sanctification, etc.
  - g. Misplaced priorities (Luke 10:38–42)
  - h. Misplaced love and trust (Rev. 2:4–5; Ps. 115; 135)
  - i. Bad company — 1 Cor. 15:33
  - j. Etc.
2. Specific exercise in your change to revive (vivify) faith — from little faith to great in faith.<sup>11</sup> (Rom. 13:11–14; 1 Cor. 9:24–27; 1 Tim. 4:7–9; Titus 2:11–14)
  - a. Examine oneself periodically (but be careful).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> A helpful tool for this is Armand Tiffe's book, *Transformed into His Likeness*.

<sup>11</sup> “Faith means confidence, trust, to hold something as true. Of course, faith must have content; there must be confidence or trust about something. To have faith in Christ unto salvation means to have confidence that He can remove the guilt of sin and grant eternal life.” *Basic Theology*, Rylie, 326

<sup>12</sup> Self-judging is what the Puritan Richard Baxter and others called it (*A Christian Directory*, 901-904). A helpful warning about introspection by Martin Lloyd-Jones, “But what is the difference between examining oneself and becoming introspective? I suggest that we cross the line from self-examination to introspection when, in a sense, we do nothing but examine ourselves, and when such self-examination becomes the main and chief end in our life.

- b. Slow down to meditate<sup>13</sup> on the Gospel of Christ every day (especially on what Christ did on your behalf and how your union in Him directly affects your communion with Him — Jer. 2:13; Luke 7:47; Rom. 13:14; 2 Cor. 11:3; Titus 2:11–14; Rev. 2:5).<sup>14</sup>
- c. Confess your sin(s) specifically and receive His parental forgiveness (Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9).
- d. Have a plan to turn from it to pursue Christlikeness.<sup>15</sup> Repentance/faith is your lifestyle (Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4: 22–32; Col. 3:1–17) — always turning from sin and turning towards Jesus.<sup>16</sup>
- e. Be sure no provisions are made for your flesh (Rom. 13:14).
- f. Where is ‘the hedge’ low in my life where I am stepping over it?
- g. Take appropriate steps of radical amputation (Matt. 5:29–30).
- h. Surface up (through data gathering and journaling) and correct (renew) all the mind’s rationalizations for the sin and replace with biblically correct thinking (you can use the thought journal at end of this handout).
- i. Be intentional, diligent and fervent in spirit in this endeavor and seek assistance when needed (Rom. 12:11; Gal. 6:1ff). Share your area of struggle with another stronger believer (Gal. 6:1ff) —include accountability in both the put off and the put on (with emphasis on the put on by faith).
- j. Possibly develop a Battle Plan (sample, “Always be P.R.E.P.A.R.E.D. for Spiritual Battle by Continually Abiding in Christ”).<sup>17</sup>

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We are meant to examine ourselves periodically, but if we are always doing it, always, as it were, putting our soul on a plate and dissecting it, that is introspection. And if we are always talking to people about ourselves and our problems and troubles, and if we are forever going to them with that kind of frown upon our face and saying: I am in great difficulty, it probably means that we are all the time centered upon ourselves. That is introspection, and that in turn leads to the condition known as morbidity.” *Spiritual Depression*, 17

<sup>13</sup> “Meditation” means to “think upon” or “reflect;” “to murmur, to mutter, to make sound with the mouth.” The implication is that meditation is talking to oneself. Biblical meditation involves thinking upon the Triune God and His Word and not some kind of spirituality or mysticism. Meditation exercises all the heart functions: the mind, the affections, and the volitions. May be spontaneous or planned. Joel Beeke, “Puritan Spirituality,” [restoringthecore.com/wpcontent/restored/BeekeMeditation.pdf](http://restoringthecore.com/wpcontent/restored/BeekeMeditation.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> *The Gospel Primer*, by Milton Vincent is a helpful tool to accomplish this perspective.

<sup>15</sup> “As repentance is the negative aspect of conversion, turning from one’s sin, so faith is the positive aspect laying hold upon the promises and the work of Christ... (pisteuo) to believe what someone says, to accept a statement (particularly of a religious nature) as true...personal trust as distinct from mere credence or belief.” Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 938–939.

<sup>16</sup> Replacement is taught throughout the Scriptures: (e.g. Ps. 1:1–2; Isa. 1:16–17; Rom. 13:14; 1 Thess. 5:21–22; Heb. 10:25; James 5:12; 1 Pet. 3:9; 3 John 11), but the most clear and complete references are Eph. 4:22–32 and Col. 3:5–17.

<sup>17</sup> A sample of a specific battle plan can be seen in the book, *Killing Sin Habits: Conquering Sin with Radical Faith*, Stuart & Zondra Scott, 71–74.

- k. Actively and specifically pursue loving others.<sup>18</sup>
3. Specific commitments to help in this sanctification process
- a. By God's grace, I will pursue knowing and understanding God more in His Word by doing this: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. One of my issues that I will work on by the help of the Holy Spirit, out of love for Jesus and the glory of God is: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. The first step in working on this issue will be: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. Two names of people I will seek accountability from are:
    - 1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Conclusion

*"Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. Rom. 13:11–14*

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:1–2*

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<sup>18</sup> A Christlike selfless and enduring commitment of the redeemed heart (by faith in Christ in our thoughts, affections and choices) to intentionally care for and benefit the true needs of another person by righteous, truthful, and compassionate thoughts, words and sacrificial actions by the enablement of the Spirit and for the glory of God. Taken from *The Exemplary Husband*, Focus Publishers



## Several Excellent Quotes by Various Puritans

*“True mourning for sin must flow from spiritual convictions of the evil, and vileness, and dimmable nature of sin...true mourning for sin is more for the evil that is in sin, than the evil that comes by sin; more because it dishonors God, and wounds Christ, and grieves the Spirit, and makes the soul unlike God, than because it damns the soul. Now, there are many that mourn for sin, not so much for the evil that is in it, as for the evil that it brings with it...” Matthew Mead, The Almost Christian Discovered, 56–57*

*“A truly mortified man is like a warrior: he will either kill or be killed. He will kill his sins or else his sin will kill him. Now examine yourselves in this: are you only fencers, to sport and play with your lusts, or are you warriors who fight with an implacable opposition against sin? Do you only give a slight scare to sin or have you given it a deadly wound?” Christopher Love, The Mortified Christian, 38*

*“Though Christ justifies us from the guilt of sin, we must labor to be freed from the filth of sin.” Christopher Love, 4*

*“Exercise and success (in mortification and vivification) are the two main cherishers of grace in the heart, let not that man think he makes any progress in holiness who walks not over the bellies of his lusts.” John Owen, Mortification of Sin, p. 15 (parenthesis is added to explain author’s context)*

*“Set faith at work on Christ for the killing of thy sin...Live in this, and thou wilt die a conqueror. Mortification of sin is peculiarly from the death of Christ. This is the reason why He died. Such faith will look to Christ for power to mortify sin, and for grace to be conformed to Him in His death.” John Owen, p. 291*

*“Mortification can never be thought of as separated from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He brings the work to a consummation. He convinces of sin in the first place and reveals the help that is in Christ. He establishes the heart to expect relief, and He alone brings the cross of Christ into our hearts with its sin-killing power; for by the Spirit we are baptized into the death of Christ. He is both Author and Finisher of sanctification. His presence gives support in this essential work.” John Owen*

*“Many do their sins, as mariners do by their goods, cast them out in a storm, wishing for them again in a calm... Many confess their sins, but with no intent to forsake sin; they confess the sins they have committed, but do not leave the sins they have confessed.” Mead, 59*

## Resources

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Scott, Stuart and Zondra. *Killing Sin Habits: Conquering Sin with Radical Faith*, (Focus, 2013).

Venning, Ralph. *The Sinfulness of Sin* (Horsham, PA: Banner of Truth, 1669; 1996).

Watson, Thomas. *The Doctrine of Repentance* (Horsham, PA: Banner of Truth, 1668; 1994).

## Thought Renewal Worksheet

What happened?
What am I wanting, thinking and feeling? (Pick one major thought/belief/desire)
RESPONSE to and AWARENESS of God (What can I rejoice in the Lord about? How encouraging is it to your faith to know the Lord is with you in this situation?) Phil. 4:4-5
What can I PRAY and be thankful for considering this thought? (Is there anything I need to confess?) Phil. 4:6-7
What scriptures will help me with this thought/desire? Phil. 4:8
Now, what can I BE DWELLING ON about this situation that is loving (to both God and others), true, thankful, hopeful and God-glorifying in light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? (The Renewed Thought is...)
What can I DO with this renewed thought (with Spirit's help) to honor and obey the Lord and serve others with my affections, mind and actions? Phil. 4:9

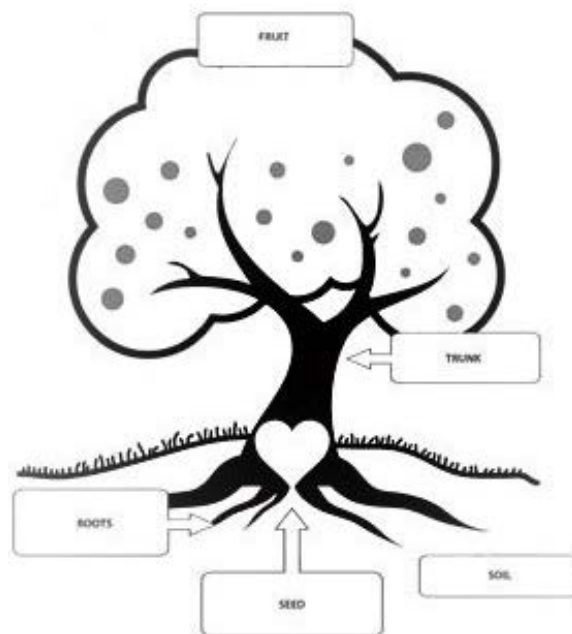
# HELPING THOSE STRUGGLING WITH HOMOSEXUALITY AND GENDER CONFUSION

Timothy Geiger, MDiv

## Session I: Examining Same-Sex Attraction and Gender Dysphoria through a Biblical Lens

### A. Introduction

1. Where do patterns of desire, temptation, and sin come from?
  - Why is it important to know where these patterns come from?
    - 1) To minister effectively
    - 2) To sympathize or empathize with those who struggle
2. Harvest USA's Tree Model



- a. **The Seed:** that from which everything we do, think and say grows
  - 1) Corrupted by sin—Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 5:12
  - 2) Controlling—Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:18-20
- b. **The Soil:** circumstances that influence us
  - 1) Soil influences fall into eight general categories:

- a) Gender, and cultural definitions of gender
  - b) Physical characteristics
  - c) Personality and gifting
  - d) Family influences
  - e) Cultural influences
  - f) Peer pressure
  - g) Trauma (emotional, physical, sexual)
  - h) Spiritual oppression, spiritual starvation
- 2) Soil influences never have a determinative effect on a person. They do, however, have a strong shaping effect.
- c. **The Roots:** Desires that feed the heart
- 1) Roots reach out into the Soil in search of:
- a) Life
  - b) Sustenance
  - c) Meaning
  - b) Identity



- 2) When Roots try to find satisfaction in broken Soil, the best they do is find counterfeit satisfaction (gratification).

d **The Trunk:** Worldviews that shape our decisions

1) The Trunk is what we functionally believe about

- a) Ourselves
- b) Others
- c) God
- d) The world in general

2) Some common worldview statements

- *I never fit in around other men (women), so I must be gay.*
- *My mother (father) was always just a little displeased with me, so I need to find affirmation from others, no matter the cost.*
- *My parents told me I wasn't the kind of girl (boy) they wanted, so I must be trans.*
- *God doesn't really love me, because I've asked him to make me straight (cisgender) over and over and he hasn't done it*
- *The only value I have is in being sexual with someone else.*
- *The only way I can find comfort is by acting queer.*
- *Life will always be too hard. I should never expect anything to go my way.*
- *It's too difficult for me to make real friends. But I can find intimacy through sex.*
- *I will always be alone.*

3) The Trunk is the result of the Roots interacting with the Soil, and being interpreted through the fallen Seed.

4) The Trunk develops (and changes) over the course of a lifetime.

5) The Trunk becomes our operating system. We use it as a sorting mechanism (a filter) to determine all present and future decisions about how we'll respond to disappointment.

e. **The Fruit:** Particular behaviors that reflect the rest of the Tree

- The Fruit really isn't the problem—it's only the product of a system that's broken.

f. **The New Seed:** Our hope

- 1) Through the work of Jesus, God has given us new hearts with renewed desires and the power to live them out—Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 11:19–20.
- 2) The New Seed is grafted onto the Fallen Seed, and over the course of time, becomes increasingly dominant. However, the historic influence of the Fallen Seed doesn't completely fade away.
- 3) Repentance is the lifelong process of our Roots and Trunk gradually being transformed so we look, think, desire and act more and more like Jesus does.

g. Four takeaways

- 1) The background and causes of sexual and gender-related sin patterns and other sin patterns are generally the same.
- 2) Real, transforming relationship with Jesus Christ is the only answer to patterns of sexual or gender-based sin (or any patterns of sin).
- 3) The way we *generally* grow in relationship with Jesus Christ is through real, dynamic relationship with one another in His Body (the Church).
- 4) Holiness, not sinlessness, is the goal of sanctification.

## Session II: What the Church Must Do to Help Same-Sex and Gender Strugglers

### A. Introduction

Be proactive—Ephesians 4:11–24

- God has given us a pattern for life and for obedience. He calls the Church to faithfully live it out through:
  - 1) Church leaders equipping the saints for the work of ministry (4:11–12), which is that we all grow up “into” Christ (4:13–14).
  - 2) Church members actively help one another to put off the old self and put on the new self, “created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (4:15–24).

### B. Be proactive: pray and fast

1. Pray for the church leaders, for the Body and for those in the church who are struggling in secret.
2. Invite the church to assemble to fast and pray together, that your church might be a particular place of healing, where the “Body grows, so that it builds itself up in love” (Ephesians 4:16).

### C. Be proactive: teach God’s design for sex, sexuality, and gender

1. Teach a positive view of sex, sexuality, and gender.
  - a. God’s design is inherently good, and following it as a pattern of life brings blessing.
  - b. Don’t let everything your members hear about sex, sexuality, and gender be negative and prohibitive.
2. God’s design for sex and sexuality: 1 Corinthians 6:12–7:35
  - a. Our bodies and our minds are not our own—we were designed for the Lord and to serve the Lord.
  - b. Sex, in its proper context, is meant to be good and edifying.
  - c. Sex is to be enjoyed between one man and one woman in the context of covenant marriage.
  - d. Sex is meant primarily for the other—not for ourselves.
  - e. Sex and sexuality are not ultimate. They serve as signposts, pointing us toward the Lord, our union with him and the intimacy we share with him.
  - f. Obedience to God’s design is meant to lead to our devotion to and pleasure in the Lord.
3. God’s design for gender: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:21-25
  - a. There are two and only two genders made in creation: male and female.

- b. Gender and birth sex correspond to each other.
- c. You can't decouple sex and sexuality from gender; they operate as a system.
- d. Male and female complement each other; together they (dimly) reflect the nature and glory of God in the Trinity.

#### **D. Be proactive: Invite Strugglers to Come into the Light**

1. Be aware that most of the same-sex and gender strugglers in the Church are struggling secretly.
2. Actively and publicly address barriers to strugglers coming forward.
  - a. Shame and guilt
    - Focus on grace: Titus 3:4–7 | 1 John 4:16–19
  - b. Fear of exposure and judgment
    - Communicate that struggles with sin are supposed to be dealt with in the Body: Ephesians 5:8–14 | Galatians 6:1–2
  - c. Culture of deception and self-deception
    - Cultivate authentic community in the church: Hebrews 3:12–13 | Ephesians 4:11–16
  - d. "I'm the only one. No other Christian struggles like this."
    - Communicate that there is no temptation or sin pattern that is unique: 1 Corinthians 10:13.
  - e. "Real Christians don't struggle with this."
    - "Normalize" the struggle with sin among Christians: Romans 7:15–25 | Hebrews 4:15–16.
  - f. Prior, unsuccessful attempts at change
    - Communicate that effective repentance is something that requires the help of the Body: 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14.
  - g. Misunderstanding of the real problem
    - Communicate that no sin pattern is behavioral in nature, but is rooted in idolatry: James 1:13–15 | 1 Corinthians 10:13–14.

#### **E. Be proactive: cultivate discipleship, accountability, and community**

1. Discipleship
  - Focus on union with Christ: both the ontological reality and the economic benefits. Ephesians 1:3–2:22



- 1) Effective discipleship helps the individual to both answer and experience the benefits of the answer to this question: “What difference does the Person and Work of Jesus Christ make for me in the ways in which I struggle?”
  - 2) Discipleship is most effectively experienced within the context of ongoing, intimate relationship with other Christians.
    - The “Life on Life” Model
2. Accountability
- a. Accountability should be proactive, rather than reactive, in nature.
    - 1) Reactive accountability is confessional in nature and leads to feelings of shame and guilt.
    - 2) Proactive accountability is discipleship-based and is meant to both cultivate an experience of oneness with Christ and to prevent sin in the first place.
      - a) Proactive accountability is based in ongoing friendship and attacks sin at the level of desire and temptation.
      - b) Proactive accountability helps sexual and gender strugglers not only to walk in repentance from patterns of desire, temptation and sin, but to become more fully engaged members of the Church.
    - 3) Proactive accountability is based in ongoing friendship and attacks sin at the level of desire and temptation.
    - 4) Proactive accountability helps sexual and gender strugglers not only to walk in repentance from patterns of desire, temptation, and sin, but to become more fully engaged members of the Church.
3. Community
- a. Many same-sex and gender strugglers feel, at some level, as though they lack authentic community in the Church and in the world.
    - 1) Some same-sex and gender strugglers will seek out others who struggle similarly in order to create that sense of community.
    - 2) Others may seek out other forms of counterfeit community and connectedness through pornography, fantasy, hooking up with others for sexual encounters, flirting or dressing up to go out in public.
  - b. The Church must offer authentic community to all its members and work diligently to cultivate that community.
    - 1) For same-sex and gender strugglers, it needs to create and maintain effective structures to invite these men and women who would otherwise be on the margins of the Church into real and effective community with other believers. According to Scripture, this is the only way in which God’s people thrive and grow in Christ.

- 2) The Church must also offer authentic community to its members who are not married, and who may never be married, in order that they would experience some of the relational and emotional fulfillment of their married peers.
- c. The Church must cultivate the view that same-sex and gender strugglers are an essential part of the Body—and as such, must be contributing members of the Body community, as well as receiving love, affirmation and relational fulfillment.

## **F. Be proactive: Cultivate a Network of Helpers in Your Church**

1. Why specially-equipped helpers?
  - a. Same-sex and gender strugglers already struggle feeling as though no one will understand them, and no one will understand their particular struggles or desires. Part of each church's ministry to them must be to provide as safe, as positive and as practically helpful a space as possible for them to grow in faith and repentance.
  - b. Since same-sex and gender strugglers likely feel so different from others in the church, they may not experience standard discipleship programs in the church (Bible studies, small groups, etc.) as being helpful to them. They also may not feel safe sharing what's going on in their hearts and lives in the context of a larger group.
2. What kinds of specially-equipped helpers?
  - a. Individual discipleship partners
  - b. Facilitators for all-male or all-female Biblical support groups
  - c. Married couples to come alongside other married couples working to recover from the effects of sin or betrayal
3. How long would strugglers or families work with these helpers?
  - a. Not long. The goal is to work to progressively mainstream strugglers into the fuller life of the church.
    - Average: six months to two years
  - b. A companion goal is for the struggler to have an ever-increasing circle of accountability (progressively more people in the church who are aware of their story, how they struggle, and how they need particular ministry). This gradually obviates the need for working exclusively with helpers.
4. How do you select and equip these helpers?
  - a. Select men and women who:
    - 1) Understand God's grace and have seen it at work in their own lives
    - 2) Know how to patiently and compassionately disciple others
    - 3) Are willing to sacrificially care for the men and women whom God brings them
  - b. Equip these helpers:

- 1). Pray with them, over them and for them.
- 2). Use a life-on-life style discipleship curriculum.
- 3). Consider Harvest USA's Partner Ministries Program.
- 4). Offer ongoing support, encouragement and accountability.

## **G. Be proactive: exercise church discipline**

1. Church discipline is meant to be applied to unrepentant sinners, and its purpose is to bring that individual to repentance.
  - a. Remember that repentance is progressive and lifelong.
  - b. Remember that the goal of repentance is holiness, not sinlessness.
2. Discipline is meant to be proactive and progressive.
3. Formal discipline can provide an opportunity for others in the church who struggle similarly to come forward and ask for help—pray for that outcome.
4. Exercise formal discipline prayerfully, wisely and sparingly.
  - To whatever extent it is within your control, you don't want others struggling in secret to be afraid of coming forward for help for fear of formal discipline.

## Session III: Walking with Sexual and Gender Strugglers on the Road toward Repentance

### A. Helping Priorities

1. Incarnate the love and ministry of Jesus Christ, in order to build up the Body—Ephesians 4:11–16.
2. Help the struggler to tell his or her story and sympathize with them—Hebrews 4:15–16.
3. Point the struggler toward Christ and offer them practical guidance in their walk in repentance—Colossians 3:1–17.
4. Lovingly pursue the struggler—Jude 22–23.

### B. Helping Process

1. The PALACE Method
  - a. **Pray** (by yourself, and/or with the struggler).
  - b. **Affirm** that the struggler coming forward and asking for help is a good thing.
  - c. **Listen** actively to his or her story.
  - d. **Ask** questions that will begin to uncover idols and worldviews.
  - e. **Challenge** false statements with truth from Scripture.
  - f. **Encourage** and **Establish** a simple agenda for change.
2. The PALACE Steps
  - a. **Pray** (by yourself, and/or with the struggler).
    - 1) For wisdom and discernment
    - 2) For the struggler to be honest and transparent
    - 3) For the struggler to hear and believe the Gospel, at a heart level
  - b. **Affirm** that the struggler coming forward and asking for help is a good thing.
    - 1) The struggler is usually fearful, ashamed, terrified of consequences and discouraged because he or she has tried to correct this pattern of thought or behavior on his or her own.
    - 2) Affirm the struggler verbally.
      - *The Lord wants to help you; that's why we're talking about this right now.*
      - *You don't have to go through this alone; I'm here to help you.*

- *I know you're afraid right now, but God is faithful and is working for your good in this.*

3) Affirm the struggler regularly.

c. **Listen** actively to his or her story.

1) Ask them to tell you the contours of their story—not just about the sin pattern, but about the person.

- *Ask about the history of their struggle: how it began and how it changed over the course of time.*
- *Ask about their own history:*
  - *The family in which they grew up*
  - *Their friendships—none, few, many? Are they superficial or heart-level? What keeps their friendships from being deeper?*
  - *Their relationship with the Lord*
  - *Marriage (if applicable)—what are the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship? What are the levels of spiritual, emotional and sexual intimacy? Why?*
- *Ask for three adjectives they would use to describe themselves. Talk about why he or she chose those three.*
- *Ask what he or she has done to overcome the struggle. What has worked and what hasn't? Why?*

2) Ask follow-up questions in a conversational manner.

3) Make note of your questions and the struggler's responses.

d. **Ask** questions that will begin to uncover idols and worldviews.

1) Find out what functional idols the struggler serves.



- 2) Some diagnostic questions to help a struggler identify which idols he or she struggles with:

- Which of these desires do you put the most energy into achieving?
- What in your life are you most afraid of losing?
- When you have downtime or extra money, which of these desires do you automatically tend to focus on?
- When you daydream, which of these desires seem to play out in those fantasies?
- In which ways do you feel like you don't measure up to other people?
- In which ways do you feel like you don't measure up to your own expectations?
- When you experience sexual or gender-related temptation, what is going on in your circumstances at that moment? How are you feeling physically, emotionally and spiritually?

- 3) The key to discipleship is realizing that we sin for a reason: because our hearts react to the felt needs of these unsatisfied desires | James 1:13–15.
- 4) Instead of treating sin as a purely behavioral problem, we help strugglers submit their desires to the Lord, with the understanding that he is the one who ultimately satisfies desires—or grants grace to be content if they aren't met in that moment | Psalms 107:9.
- 5) Find out what the struggler believes functionally about themselves, God, and others. Listen to what they say, extrapolate potential worldview statements and ask the struggler if they seem to make sense to them.

Some sample worldview statements:

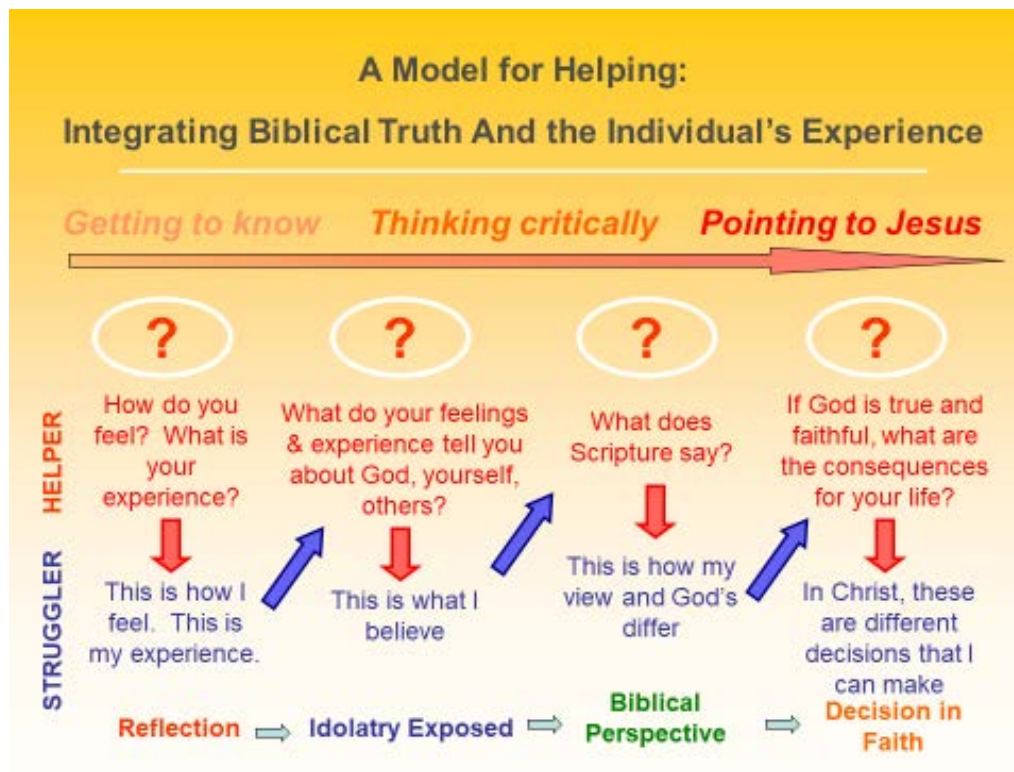
- God could never love someone like me.
- God loves other people differently than he loves me.
- I'm a failure.
- Other people are too risky to be honest with.
- I deserve better treatment from others / from God.
- Life will never get any better for me.
- I'm condemned to live out the consequences of my behavior.
- God hates me.
- I'll never fit in.
- Being sexual with someone else is the only way to feel affirmed.
- I'm not the right kind of man / woman.
- Others have failed me and will continue to fail me. I can only depend on myself.
- Others have hurt me in the past and will hurt me again if I give them the opportunity.

- 6) Worldview statements often function at the subconscious level—so strugglers may not be immediately aware of which statements guide them. You might need to help them process which ones fit them.
  - 7) Worldview statements tend to develop over the course of many years as an individual cycles through many instances of feeling despair because their desires aren't being met in the ways that they want.
  - 8) Worldview statements serve as the filters through which we make everyday decisions about how to act, and why.
- e. **Challenge** false statements with truth from Scripture.
- 1) Show the struggler what Scripture says about their functional false beliefs.
  - 2) Ask the struggler:

- Based on what Scripture says, is what you believe really true?
- If not, then what are the consequences for you? (In other words, what must be really true, if your worldview is not? And what does that mean for how you act?)
- What are different decisions you can therefore choose to make, in Christ, that will change the way you respond to various situations?

f. **Encourage** and **Establish** a simple agenda for change

- 1) Process with the struggler what he or she can do differently when they experience strong desires and are in triggering situations.



- 2) Assign easily-accomplished, high-payoff homework like Scripture memorization, reading and thinking about a chapter in a book, or committing to prayer for 10 minutes daily.
- 3) Plan to meet again.
- 4) Draw the struggler into redemptive community that will help him or her grow in union with Christ. Acknowledge that this process might be difficult for the struggler. Make a plan, role-play, and process with him or her regularly how the integration is going for them (and how it makes him or her feel).
- 5) Applaud successes, no matter how small.
- 6) Failures are temporary, not ultimate.
- 7) Process with the struggler how his or her typical desires are surfacing, and what he or she is doing with those desires.
- 8) Facilitate an expanding circle of accountability, and process with the struggler how he or she is experiencing those relationships.



- 9) With each successive meeting, build on prior successes and make homework progressively more challenging.
- 10) Keep the goal in mind: **holiness**, not sinlessness.

# HELPING WOMEN STRUGGLING WITH SEXUAL SINS AND DAMAGED MARRIAGES

Ellen Dykas, MA

## Session I: Christ's Compassion for Brokenhearted Women

### Introduction

Are we comfortable talking about sexual brokenness and moving towards women who are struggling with sin of a sexual nature? With women who are in marriages damaged due to a husband's sexual sin?

*Luke 13:10–17 — Jesus in action with courageous compassion*

### A. The Woman

1. Bent over and broken-hearted –
2. Ostracized and judged –
3. Shamed –
4. Captive to her body –

***Are we bent?*** Asking this hard question can lead us into two possible places.

1. Hiding
2. Reaching out for help

## B. Who is JESUS for Bent-over Strugglers?

1. Present –
2. Teacher –
3. One who sees and welcomes hurting women –
4. Healer –
5. Defender –
6. Celebrator –

## C. Why compassionate ministry to women impacted by sexual sin is important!

## Session II: Hope and Help for Women who Struggle Personally with Sexual Sin

### Part One - Understanding sexual struggles: The Harvest USA Tree Model

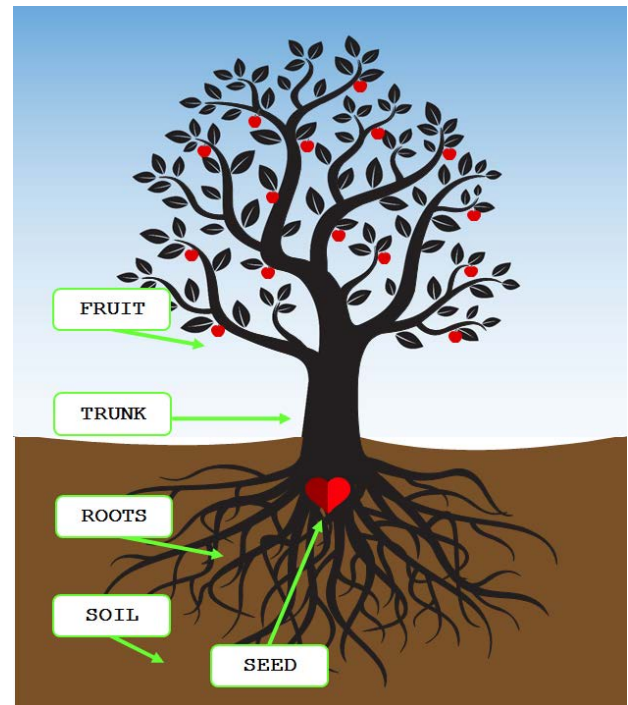
#### A. *Fruit*—Behaviors “born” from our belief

1. Bad Fruit
2. Good Fruit

#### B. *The Seed*—The sinful human heart

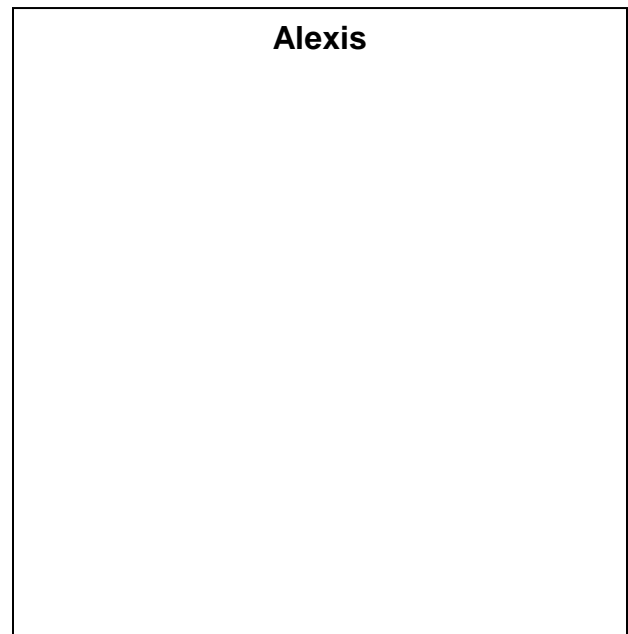
Some characteristics of a fallen heart:

1. Idolatrous
2. Selfish
3. Broken



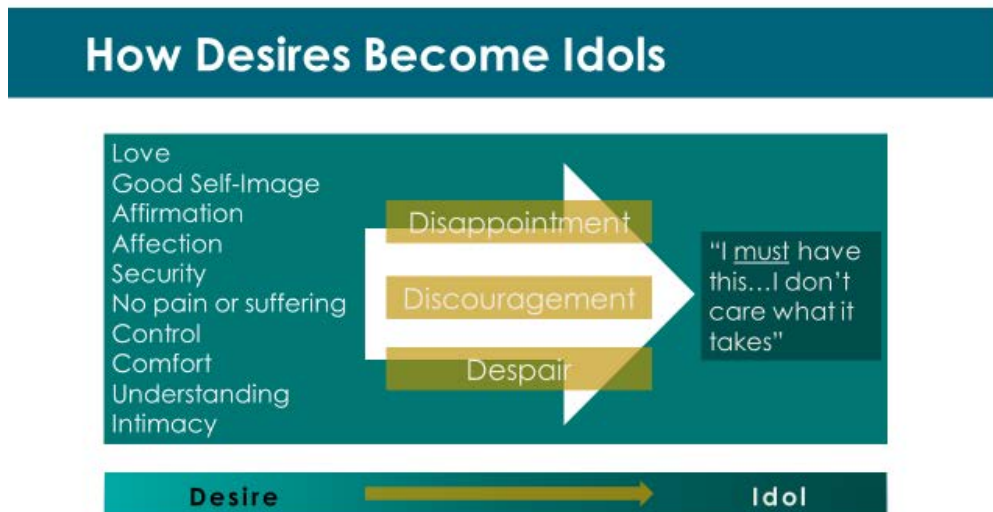
#### C. *The Soil*—Influences we experience as we live in a fallen world

1. Gender
2. Physical characteristics
3. Personality
4. Gifts/talents
5. Family dynamics
6. Culture/peer-pressure
7. Trauma
8. Blessings
9. Spiritual warfare



## D. *The Roots*—Our desires

1. Can be holy or unholy, good or evil
2. Are motivated by a heart following Christ or self



## E. *The Trunk*—Our worldviews, interpretations, true beliefs

1. About God, ourselves, others, sexuality, relationships...everything
2. May be truth-based, *or lie-based*
3. According to God's design, *or our own*

## F. *The Fruit*—The presenting problem/struggle: what brings this woman to you for help

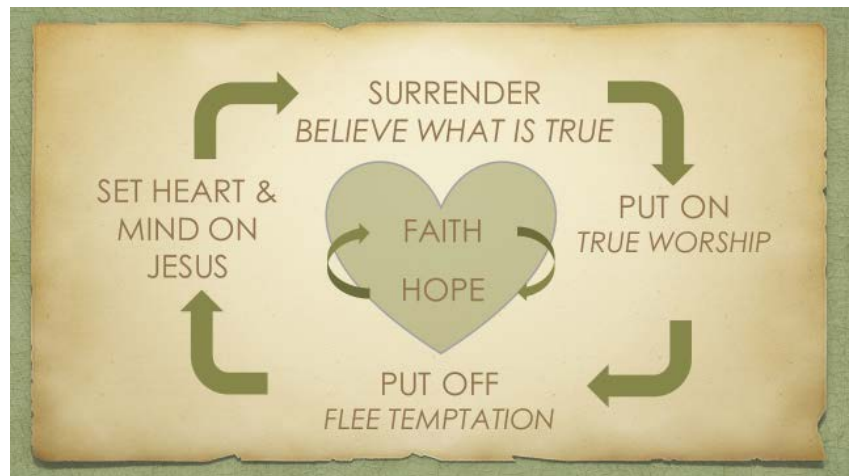


## E. God's goodness to us in the midst of temptation

1. An opportunity to draw near to God
2. Strengthens our faith for the daily battle
3. Christ is exalted
4. Growth in Christlikeness

## F. How Christ brings change

1. Surrender – target the heart
  - a. Romans 12:1–2
  - b. Hebrews 12:1–2
2. Put on Christ
  - a. Romans 13:14
  - b. Ephesians 4:22–24
  - c. Colossians 1:1–17
3. Put off: flee temptation and sin
  - a. 1 Corinthians 10:13–14
  - b. Romans 13:8–14
  - c. Colossians 3:1–17
  - d. Hebrews 3:12–13
4. Set your heart and mind on Christ
  - a. Romans 12:1–2
  - b. Colossians 3:1–4



## Recommended resources

*Sexual Sanity for Women: Healing from Sexual and Relational Brokenness* (Harvest USA/Dykas)

*Openness Unhindered*, Rosaria Butterfield

*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp

*Addictions, A Banquet in the Grave*, Ed Welch

*Crossroads: A Step by Step Guide Away from Addictions*, Ed Welch

*Sex and the Single Girl: Smart Ways to Care for Your Heart*, Ellen Dykas

*She's Got the Wrong Guy: Why Smart Women Settle*, Deepak Reju

*How People Change*, Lane/Tripp

*Making All Things New: Restoring Joy to the Sexually Broken*, David Powlison

*Word-Filled Ministry for Women*, TGC (Various authors including Ellen Dykas)



## Session III: Hope and Help for Wives of Men Who Struggle

### A. What is sexual betrayal like for a wife?

1. Shattered Dreams: a fractured marriage is revealed
2. Learning the Truth: exposure and disclosure
  - a. Husband: shame/guilt, defensiveness, relief
  - b. Wife: Shock, profound grief, shame, fear, rage
3. Reacting and Responding
  - a. Shock
  - b. Pain
  - c. Fear
  - d. Trust is shredded apart

### B. Beginning to walk forward

1. A personal journey into a Garden of Gethsemane
  - a. Betrayal by those closest
  - b. Go-to companions “fell asleep”
  - c. Alone in pain and fear
  - d. Crying out to God
  - e. Eventually able to say: “Your will Father, I will trust You.”
  - f. Rising up and going forward by faith, including forgiveness

2. Three aspects of moving forward

a. Grieving with Gospel hope

- 1) Marriage fractures can be healed, but there is no guarantee this will happen on this side of heaven.
- 2) Beauty can come from ashes, *but what is done is done*.
- 3) Ongoing death to self, not my will/dreams/desires, but Yours.
- 4) New life can come from the mini-deaths she is experiencing.

b. Surrender and repentance

- 1) “Not my will...”
- 2) 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10

c. Standing up and walking forward by faith

- 1) Pursuing Christ and His Word with vigor
- 2) Refusing to enable, accept or hide his sin
- 3) Courage to walk in the light and confront sin
- 4) Loving her husband by allowing consequences of sin to unfold
- 5) Trusting God to provide for her (helpers, kids, finances, housing)

## C. First steps of compassion & wisdom

1. Key qualities for helpers

- a. Desire to serve and love through patient listening
- b. Anchored in the gospel’s grace and wisdom
- c. Discernment: when to offer comfort and when to challenge

2. DON’Ts for helpers

- a. Avoid
- b. Spiritualize her pain
- c. Give excuses for his sin
- d. Put any blame on her for his choices and sin
- e. Ever say:
  - 1) At least it’s not \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) What's your sex life like? How often do you have sex with your husband?
- 3) Don't you know that most men struggle with this?
- 4) Offer false hope or make promises that aren't biblical

### 3. DOs for helpers

#### a. Consider the immediate needs

- 1) Comfort her
- 2) Give her the benefit of the doubt!
- 3) Listen and learn so as to know her
- 4) Acknowledge her pain
- 5) Find out what she needs NOW
- 6) If you are a man, connect her with a trustworthy, wise and compassionate woman

#### b. Consider the *long-term needs*

- 1) Side-by-side friendship (prayer, presence, encouragement, challenge)
- 2) Discipleship/Counseling (individual and marriage)
- 3) Children
- 4) Financial help
- 5) Accountability for her and for husband
- 6) Guidance on staying or not, if husband is unrepentant
- 7) Coaching on finding "safe" people

## D. Starting a biblical support group for wives in your community

### 1. Potential obstacles

- a. Husband opposed to his wife participating
- b. Women's ministry leaders oppose
- c. Leaders in your church aren't on board
- d. Spiritual warfare

### 2. What it ISN'T

3. What it IS—a safe place with a climate of grace for women to:
  - a. Be known in their suffering
  - b. Walk through suffering in Christ-centered community with others
  - c. Encouraged, comforted and challenged
  - d. Disciplined in their relationship with Christ
  - e. Receive help in taking *practical* steps of faith and obedience
  - f. Focused on hope of Christ and the gospel
4. Groups are best facilitated with two leaders who are:
  - a. Women who love God and have compassionate hearts towards hurting wives
  - b. Able to facilitate and guide discussion with gentleness and boldness
  - c. Willing to study and invest time into knowing the women
  - d. Not in the throes of their own pain regarding a husband's sexual betrayal!
  - e. Willing to be transparent regarding their personal neediness of Christ
  - f. Able to build 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 bridges to group members
5. How to begin a group:
  - a. Pray and seek prayer support
  - b. Seek pastoral counsel and support
  - c. Publicize and invite
  - d. Meet 1-1 or 1-2 with interested women
  - e. Establish confidential location, materials and schedule
6. What happens in the group:
  - a. Spiritually mature facilitators guide the group
  - b. Group commitment lived out
  - c. Guided sharing
  - d. Guided discussion (Bible, books, articles, etc.)
  - e. Prayer
  - f. Encouragement

## 7. Closing Thoughts

- a. We **must** engage this as an area of ministry in our churches
- b. How can your church grow in pre-engagement discipleship that is realistic and infused with gospel hope?

## Resources

*True Betrayal* (online resource), Brad Hambrick ([www.bradhambrick.com](http://www.bradhambrick.com))

*When a Husband is Addicted to Pornography*, Vicki Teide (Book and mini booklet)

*Hope After Betrayal*, Meg Wilson

*How to Act Right When Your Spouse Acts Wrong*, Leslie Vernick

*False Intimacy: Understanding Sexual Addiction*, Harry Schaumberg

# HELPING MEN STRUGGLING WITH SEXUAL SINS AND DAMAGED MARRIAGES

Jim Newcomer, DMin

## Session I: Men and Lies

### Introduction

All sinful lusts *lie* (Ephesians 4:22; Romans 7:11; Hebrews 3:13, 11:25; 2 Peter 2:13). As Eugene Peterson put it: “Every temptation that comes to me is packaged as a *good*.” (emphasis added)

#### A. Lie of Consequences

#### B. Lie of Control

#### C. Lie of Impact

#### D. Lie of Invisibility

**E. Lie of Minimalizing**

**F. Lie of Pie**

**G. Lie of Relief**

**H. Lie of Worship**

**I. Lie of Vacuum**

**J. Lie of Identity**

## Recommended Resources

Challies, Tim. *Sexual Detox* (Cruciform: 2010).

Coats, Dave. *Building a Pure Life* (Leominster, England: DayOne, 2012).

Lambert, Heath. *Finally Free* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013).

Reju, Deepak. *Pornography: Fighting for Purity* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R, 2018).

Street, John ed. *Men Counseling Men* (Eugene: Harvest House, 2013).



## SESSION II: PRIVATE SIN HABITS

### Introduction

While many Christian men may not wrestle with overt, public moral failures, countless many struggle with private sin habits which defeat their spirit just as much, if not more, than the public scandals. Indeed, they know what it means to be a prisoner of their own private appetites.

### A. Precipitating Factors

### B. General Nature

### C. Aftereffects

## D. Scriptural Verdict

## E. Transformation Possibility

### Recommended Resources

Berg, Jim. *Changed into His Image, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Greenville: BJU Press, 2018).

Lambert, Heath. *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).

Lutzer, Erwin. *How to Break a Stubborn Habit* (Eugene: Harvest House, 2017).

Pierre, Jeremy. *The Dynamic Heart* (Greensboro: New Growth, 2016).

Scott, Stuart. *The Exemplary Husband* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2000).

Street, John ed. *Men Counseling Men* (Eugene: Harvest House, 2013).

## SESSION III: THE QUIET SUFFERER

### Introduction

When men in marriages struggle against the intense fleshly gravity of moral failures (e.g. pornography, unfaithfulness, etc.), not only must they embark on the strenuous journey of progressive sanctification (1 Timothy 4:7b–8), but they must also grasp what they have brought upon their wives. A husband's carnage is not restricted to the island of his own existence; it deeply impacts his wife. The wise, repentant husband (2 Corinthians 7:11) will be helped in his growth as he takes a close, sobering look at the journey that he has forced on his wife—*the quiet sufferer* (Proverbs 20:5).

**A. How she must see *God*.**

**B. How she must see *herself*.**

**C. How she must see *her husband*.**

**D. How she must see *marriage*.**

**E. How she must see *forgiveness*.**

**F. How she must see *church*.**

### **Recommended Resources**

Bruans, Chris. *Unpacking Forgiveness* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008).

Harvey, Dave. *When Sinners Say, "I Do"* (Wapwallopen: Shepherd, 2007).

Ricucci, Gary and Betsy. *Love That Lasts* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006).

Newcomer, Jim. *Help! I Can't Forgive* (Wapwallopen: Shepherd, 2017).

Smith, Winston. *Help! My Spouse Committed Adultery* (Greensboro: New Growth, 2008).