

HELPING WOMEN STRUGGLING WITH SEXUAL SINS AND DAMAGED MARRIAGES

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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

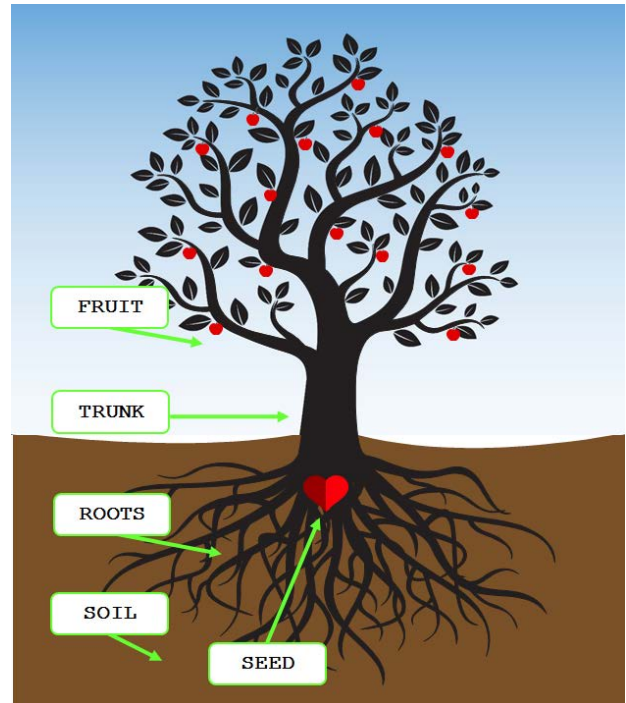
A. *Fruit*—Behaviors “born” from our belief

1. Bad Fruit
2. Good Fruit

B. *The Seed*—The sinful human heart

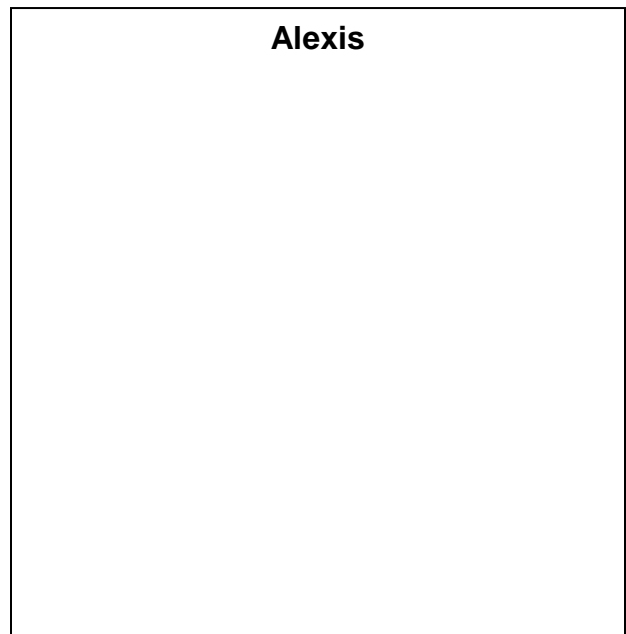
Some characteristics of a fallen heart:

1. Idolatrous
2. Selfish
3. Broken



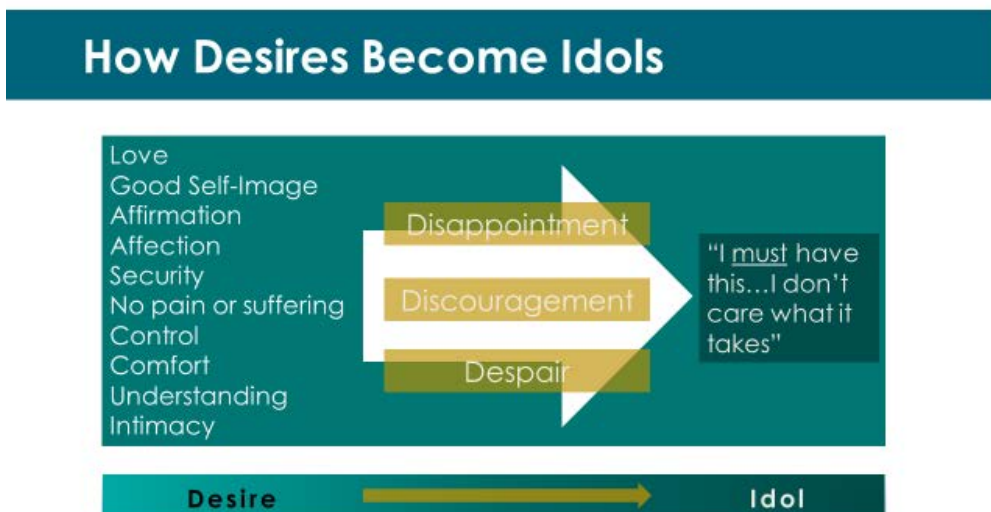
C. *The Soil*—Influences we experience as we live in a fallen world

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

Part 2: How Christ brings change

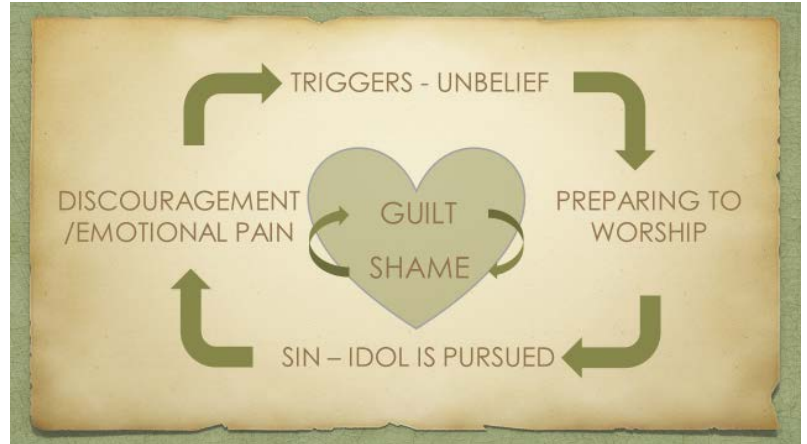
A. Jesus is our true Rescuer and Deliverer

1 Corinthians 10:13–14

B. Breaking unholy habits is hard work

C. Key Scriptures:

1. Galatians 6:7–8
2. Jeremiah 17:5–10
3. 1 John 1:7–9



D. How patterns of sin develop

1. James 1:12–15
2. Triggers
3. Unbelief
4. Preparing to “worship”
5. Sin is pursued
6. Discouragement and emotional pain
7. Guilt and shame
8. Cycle repeats itself

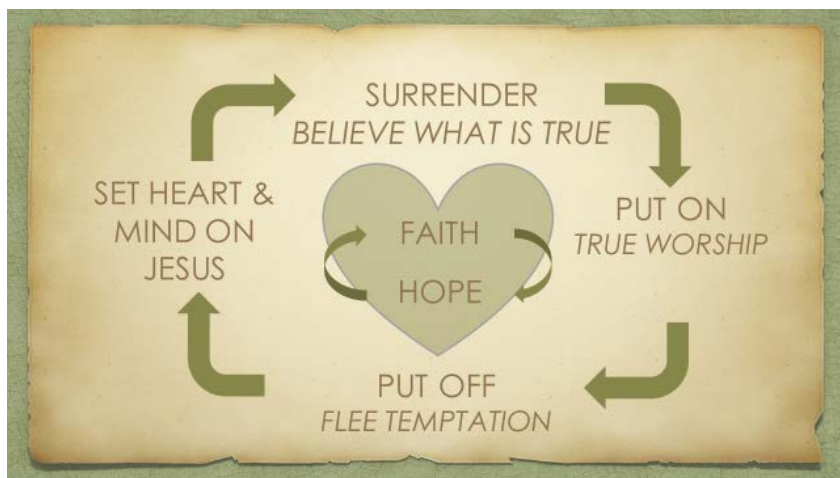
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E. God's goodness to us in the midst of temptation

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)

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