

## HEALING DISTORTED SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

God intended sex to be for pleasure and procreation within the boundaries of marriage. But when sex becomes a "god", it is ugly, boring, and enslaving. Heaping condemnation on those who are enslaved is ill-advised. Increasing shame and guilt will prove counterproductive and will not produce good mental health, Christian character, or self-control. Guilt does not inhibit sexual arousal, and may even contribute to it and keep us from using our sexuality wholesomely as God intends. Instead of condemnation, I would offer the following steps for those who have a distorted sexual development.

**1. FACE UP TO YOUR PRESENT CONDITION BEFORE GOD.** There are no secrets with God. He knows the thoughts and intentions of your heart (Hebrews 4:11-13), and you do not ever have to fear rejection by being honest with Him and confessing your sin and need. Confession is simply being truthful with God and living in continuous agreement with Him. The opposite of confession is not silence, but rationalization and self-rejection, attempting to excuse or deny your problem. This will never lead you to freedom. Your journey out of sexual bondage must include God in an honest and intimate way.

**2. COMMIT YOURSELF TO A BIBLICAL VIEW OF SEX.** All sexual expressions were intended by God to be associated with love and trust which are necessary to ensure good sexual functioning. Recent evidence indicates that trust may be one of the most important factors determining orgasmic capacity in woman. To ensure trust means that we never have the right to violate another person's conscience. **IF IT IS WRONG FOR YOUR SPOUSE, IT IS WRONG FOR YOU.**

Too many wives tearfully have asked if they have to submit to their husband's every request. Usually their husbands are asking for some kinky expression hoping to satisfy their lust. Some actually appeal to Hebrews 13:4, saying the "wedding bed undefiled" and claiming that the Bible permits all expressions of sex in the marriage. No four words are taken out of context more than these. Finish the verse: "for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." The idea is to keep the wedding bed undefiled with no adultery or fornication. A wife can meet the sexual needs of her husband, but she will never satisfy his lust.

A Biblical view of sex is always personal. It is an intimate expression of two people who are in love with each other. People who are in bondage to sex or are bored with it have depersonalized it. They become obsessed with sexual thoughts in hope for more excitement, and because obsessional sex is always depersonalized, boredom increases and obsessive thoughts grow stronger. Fantasizing another as a sex object, as opposed to seeing them as a person created in the image of God, is precisely the problem.

A Biblical view of sex is also associated with safety and security. Outside of God's plan, fear and danger can also cause sexual arousal. For instance, sneaking into a porno shop will cause sexual arousal long before actual sexual stimulant is present. And voyeurism is very resistant to treatment because arousal is not just from the viewing -the act violated a forbidden cultural standard. The emotional peak is heightened by the presence of fear and danger.

Such people must separated fear and danger from sexual arousal. A Biblical view of sex includes the concepts of safety and security so that the maximum fulfillment comes from a complete surrender of oneself to another in trust and love. Some people buy the lie that forbidden fruit is the sweetest, denying the crucial importance of the relationship between a man and a woman in finding pleasure and fulfillment in sex.

Why are we continually looking for the ultimate sexual experience? Why are we not looking for the ultimate personal experience with God and each other, and letting sex within marriage be an expression of that? Good sex will not make a good marriage, but a good marriage will have good sex.

**3. SEEK FORGIVENESS FROM ALL THOSE YOU HAVE SEXUALLY OFFENDED.** I encourage every man to go to his wife and ask forgiveness for any violation of trust. Our wives can sense when something is wrong; do not let them guess. They are actually a critical part of our living sexually free in Christ. Men are incredibly vulnerable sexually and need the caring support and discernment that a loving wife can provide.

Sadly, some never come to the point of forgiving their abuser, and so the cycle of abuse continues. Abused children usually become abusive themselves, and their children will suffer the result of yet another parent in bondage. If the victim chooses not to forgive the abuser, he or she is living in the bondage of bitterness. Yet for the restored abuser to live in condemnation because he or she has not been forgiven by the victim is to deny the finished work of Christ. Christ died once for all for the sins of the world. We must believe, live, and teach that in order to stop the cycle of abuse.

**4. RENEW YOUR MIND.** Abnormal sex is a product of obsessive thoughts. These thoughts become self-perpetuating because of the physical and mental reinforcements that comes from each mental perception and repeated action. The mind can only reflect upon that which is seen, stored or vividly imagined, and we are responsible for what we think and for our own mental purity.

I remember when I first became a Christian and committed myself to clean up my mind. As you can imagine, the problem became worse, not better. If you are giving in to sexual thoughts, temptations do not seem so strong, but when you determine not to sin, temptation becomes stronger. I remember just to keep my mind focused. My life and experiences would be quite innocent compared to most people I have talked to, but it took years to renew my mind from the images I had programmed into it earlier.

Imagine your mind to be coffee in a pot. The fluid is dark and smelly because of the old coffee grounds (pornographic material and sexual experiences) that have been put into it and left there. There is no way to rid the bitter taste and ugly coloring that now permeates it, no way to filter it out. You can, and must, get rid of the "grounds." All pornographic material must go!

Now imagine a bucket of crystal clear ice along side the coffee pot. Each ice cube represents the Word of God. If I were to take at least one ice cube every day and put it into the coffee pot, the coffee would eventually be watered down to the point where you could not even smell or see the coffee that was originally in there. That would work, provided you also committed yourself not to put more coffee grounds in the pot.

Paul writes in Colossians 3:15, "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." How are we going to let Christ rule in our heart? The next verse says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell richly within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Just like Jesus, we must stand against temptation with the truth of God's Word. When that tempting thought first hits, take it captive to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy Word. Thy Word have I treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee." (Psalm 119:9,11.)

Winning the battle for our minds is often two steps forward and one back. Then it is five steps forward and one back, until there are so many positive steps forward that the "one back" is a fading memory. Remember, you may despair in asking God to forgive you when you fall again and again, but He never despairs in forgiving.

**5. SEEK LEGITIMATE RELATIONSHIPS THAT MEET YOUR NEEDS OF LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE.** People with sexual addictions tend to isolate themselves. We need each other; we were never designed to survive alone. Few seek Christian help, because of the shame. Consequently, they stay in bondage. When we are satisfied in our relationships, deep legitimate needs are met. Finding fulfillment in sexual expressions instead of relationships will lead to addiction.

**6. LEARN TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT.** Galations 5:16 says, "Walk by the spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." A legalistic walk with God will only bring condemnation, but a dependent relationship with Him, with His grace sustaining us is our real hope.

Admittedly, sexual bondage is a difficult bondage to break, but every person can be free from Satan's grasp in that area. The terrible cost of not fighting for that freedom is too high a price to pay. Your sexual and spiritual freedom are worth the fight.