

“Whose Slave Will You Be? A Battle of Mind, Body and Soul!”

Romans 12:1-2

Some Opening Thoughts and Observations About Sexual Addictions

- Sex is a good gift from a great God.
- Sex also is a dangerous and powerful gift from a great God that when rightly handled will bring enormous blessings, but when wrongly handled will destroy you.
- All sin is addiction.
- Good gifts when not properly used often become cruel and even tyrannical task masters.
- A “good thing” turned into a “god thing” will become a bad thing: an idol.
- The gateway to the mind and ultimately the soul is the eye (Job 31:1).
- What you feed will live and what you starve will die.
- You must daily, moment by moment, be killing sin or sin will be killing you (John Owen).
- The victories of today are not sufficient for the battles for tomorrow.
- The greatest battles you will fight are battles of the mind that become a battle for your soul. Jesus won that battle for you! Claim it! Live in it!
- All of us serve a master. The question is: what master will you serve?

I. **There must be a surrender of the body to Christ**

12:1

- Abraham Kuyper famously and right said, “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, “Mine!” (*Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, Eerdmans, 1998, 488).
- This statement is true and that includes our bodies and our sex lives. They rightly belong to Jesus!

1) Surrender to Christ out of gratitude for the gospel

- The “mercies of God” looks back to Romans 1-11 and in particular the power of the gospel (1:16) to take us from sin (1:18-3:20) to salvation (3:21-5:21) to sanctification (6:1-8:39) to sovereignty (9:1-11:36) and now service (12:1ff).
- These mercies are found in Christ in whom “all the promises of God find their yes in Him” (2 Cor. 1:20).
- John Piper believes that knowing and loving the supremacy of Christ in His person and work is the path to sexual purity and godliness. He writes, “I would like to help you know the supremacy of Christ more fully and show you a couple ways this will affect your sexuality. My conviction is that the better you know the supremacy of Christ the more sacred and satisfying and Christ-exalting your sexuality will be. I have a picture in my mind of the majesty of Christ like the sun at the

center of the solar system of your life. The massive sun, 333,000 times the mass of the earth holds all the planets in orbit, even little Pluto, 3.6 billion miles away.

So it is with the supremacy of Christ in your life. All the planets of your life – your sexuality and desires, your commitments and beliefs, your aspirations and dreams, your attitudes and convictions, your habits and disciplines, your solitude and relationships, your labor and leisure, your thinking and feeling – all the planets of your life are held in orbit by the greatness and gravity and blazing brightness of the supremacy of Jesus Christ at the center of your life. And if he ceases to be the bright, blazing, satisfying beauty at the center of your life, the planets will fly into confusion, and a hundred things will be out of control, and sooner or later they will crash into destruction.

We are made to know Christ as he really is. (Which is why biblical doctrine is so important.) We were created to comprehend – as much as a creature can – the supremacy of Christ. And the knowing we were made to experience is not the knowing of disinterested awareness – but the knowing of admiration and wonder and awe and intimacy and ecstasy and embrace....

We were made to see and savor with everlasting satisfaction the supremacy of Christ. Our sexuality points to this, and our sexuality is purified by this. We are sexual beings that we may know something more of the supremacy of Christ. And we must know the supremacy of Christ – we must know *him* in his supremacy – in order to experience our sexuality as sacred and sweet and Christ-exalting

There are many practical strategies for being sexually pure in mind and body. I don't demean them. I use them! But with all my heart I know, and with the authority of Scripture I know that the time space ships of our moral strategies will be useless in nudging the planet of sexuality into orbit, unless the sun of our solar system is the supremacy of Christ.

Oh, that the risen, living Christ, therefore, would come to us (even now) by his Spirit and through his Word and reveal to us:

- The supremacy of his *deity*, equal with God the Father in all his attributes.
- The supremacy of his *eternality*.
- The supremacy of his never-changing *constancy* in all his virtues and all his character and all his commitments.
- The supremacy of his *knowledge* that makes the Library of Congress look like a matchbox, and all the information on the Internet look like

a little 1940's farmer's almanac, and quantum physics seem like a first-grade reader.

- The supremacy of his *wisdom*.
- The supremacy of his *authority* over heaven and earth and hell, without whose permission no man and no demon can move one inch.
- The supremacy of his *providence*.
- The supremacy of his *word* that moment by moment upholds the universe.
- The supremacy of his *power*.
- The supremacy of his *purity* never to sin, or to have one millisecond of a bad attitude or an evil, lustful thought.
- The supremacy of his *trustworthiness* never to break his word or let one promise fall to the ground.
- The supremacy of his *justice*.
- The supremacy of his *patience* to endure our dullness for decade after decade.
- The supremacy of his sovereign, servant *obedience* to keep his Father's commandments perfectly and then embrace the excruciating pain of the cross willingly.
- The supremacy of his *meekness* and lowliness and tenderness.

- The supremacy of his *wrath* that will one day explode against this world with such fierceness that people will call out for the rocks and the mountains to crush them rather than face the wrath of the Lamb.
- The supremacy of his *grace* that gives life to spiritually dead rebels and wakens faith in hell-bound haters of God.
- The supremacy of his *love* that willingly dies for us even while we were sinners and frees us for the ever-increasing joy in making much of him forever.

2) Surrender to Christ daily as a decisive decision

- 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”
- 6:13, “The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.” We have bodies so that God might be glorified in them. That is why God gave you a body – whether it’s tall or short, pretty or plain, strong or feeble. Philippians 1:20, “It is my eager expectation and hope that Christ will...be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.” Our bodies are given to us so that in the way we use them Christ

is made to look more valuable to us than anything or anyone. This includes how we use them sexually! We are to use our bodies sexually for His glory.

- Paul says “present your bodies.” That is his way of saying all of you all of the time!
 - It is volitional.
 - It is total.
 - It is not optional

3) Surrender to Christ in death that you might live today

- Harry Schaumburg writes, “After two decades of helping set free those held captive by sexual sin, I’m convinced that the concept of sexual addiction *as a disease* does not fully identify the seriousness of the problem. If we are going to get serious about the problem in the church we can ill afford to be misled in our thinking. The real problem is hidden deep within. The least bit of lust is an indication of vast corruption in the human heart. It is an enslavement that cannot be broken through any form of behavior management, recovery program, or counseling. The inside is so ravaged by sin that we can do nothing to change it.” (“Sexual Sin in the Ministry”, 3-6-12).

- He is right. We cannot change. In fact, we have to die if we are to truly live.
- Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
- Colossians 3:5 says, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire...”
- Following Jesus is not a recovery program because it is the way of the cross. It is a place where we die so that we might live.

II. There must be a surrender of the soul to Christ 12:1

- The deception of sexual sin runs deeper than we think. It drills down to the foundation of our very soul. First, there is the double life with secret liaisons, endless hidden hours on a computer, or the misuse of unaccounted time away from the office or home. The behavior is carefully hidden from view, but there are lies, then more lies to cover the lies. Face the facts: the motive for secrecy is to keep doing it. But secrecy of sexual sin also indicates a person’s commitment to flee from the light. Jesus said, “And people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (John 3:19). But the second level of deception is worse: self-

deception. If the heart is deceitful, it impacts the way we want to see the secret things in our lives, particularly secret sexual sins.

- The sexual sinner is destined to be disappointed because he is chasing after a false, illusionary intimacy.
- And, the person chasing after sexual intimacy has forsaken the only true intimacy that can satisfy the soul: intimacy with God.

1) Holiness is required in true surrender

- John Owen said, “Every unclean thought would be adultery if it could.”
- John Piper, “the way to fight lust is to feed faith with the precious and magnificent promise that the pure in heart will see, face to face, the all satisfying glory of God” (*Future Grace*, 338).
- A living sacrifice will result in a holy and acceptable life to God.
 - Holy → separated from sin in order to be separated to the Savior.
 - Acceptable → you live a life consistent with the gospel and pleasing to God.

2) Worship is required in true surrender

- Living, moving and having your very being in Christ day by day is a life of worship. It enlarges and feeds the soul so that sex and its little, momentary and fleeting thrills are rightly seen for the little thing it is.

- Getting caught in sexual sin does not change the heart. Worship changes the heart!
- Interestingly, the phrase “your spiritual worship” could be translated “your rational service.” The two ideas are not mutually exclusive. Spiritual worship is the rational and reasonable thing to do in response to who Christ is and what Christ has done. It draws near to Christ in worship and unfettered adoration and makes oneself immune to the lies of Satan who is vitally interested in our worship! Let’s apply this to one specific area: porn.
- My friend Russ Moore says, “Pornography promises orgasms without intimacy. The arousal that makes it so attractive is ultimately spiritual to the core. Satan isn’t a creator but a plagiarist. His power is parasitic, latching on to good impulses and directing them toward his own purpose. God intends a man to feel the wildness of sexuality in the self-giving union with his wife. And a man is meant to, when necessary, fight for his family, his people, for the weak and vulnerable who are being oppressed. The drive to the ecstasy of just love is a gospel matter. The sexual union pictures the cosmic mystery of the union of Christ and his church. The call to fight is grounded in a God

who protects his people, a Shepherd Christ who grabs his sheep from the jaws of the wolves.”

- This is a vision that will inspire “warfare worship.” Yes, we as warring worshipers of a great King who bought us must declare war on sexual sin with a determination to conquer it thru Christ in whom we can do all things because He strengthens us!

III. There must be a surrender of the mind to Christ 12:2

- John Piper says, “Knowing God is the path to sexual purity. And if you are in bondage to pornography and fantasies or fornication or adultery the immediate and long-term strategy of this war is: Know God! Know God! Lustful passions are the mark of the Gentiles who do not know God. (See 1 Peter 1:14; Ephesians 4:22; Romans 1:23-28)...Now we can see why it is that Paul would say that knowing God is so crucial in the war on lust and pornography and fornication and adultery. If, by some means you get rid of lustful thoughts and slavery to pornography and fornication and adultery – without any reference to the knowledge of God, he won’t get any glory for your new behavior. In other words, God is not just interested in what you do with your body, he is interested in – he is passionately concerned with – why you do it. If there is no connection between your knowing God, and your sexual purity, God gets no glory and you are in the grip of another idol.

Knowing God is the path to sexual purity because the purpose of sex and the purpose of the body is to magnify the supreme worth of God and the infinite value of Jesus Christ. And he will not be seen as supremely worthy and infinitely valuable if knowing him is not the key and the path of our liberation. “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). And Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). Knowing God, knowing Christ, is the path to sexual purity.” (10-13-02).

1) Believe the gospel to fight the urge to conform and give in

- One of the main reasons the world and the church are awash in lust and pornography (by men and women – and now we know that 30% of internet pornography is now viewed by women) is that our lives are intellectually and emotionally disconnected from the infinite, soul-staggering grandeur of God for which we were made. Our culture is drowning in a sea of triviality, pettiness, foolishness, and silliness. Television is trivial. Radio is trivial. Sports are trivial. Conversation is trivial. Education is trivial. Want of more is trivial. Christian books are trivial. Worship styles are trivial. It is inevitable that the human heart, which was made to be staggered with the supremacy and greatness of Christ, but instead is drowning in a sea of useless

entertainment, will reach for the best natural buzz that life can give:
sex.

- This, in part, is what it means to be conformed, shaped and squeezed into the mold of this evil world system under the ‘god of this world’ (2 Cor. 4:4).
- I am convinced that one strategy for fighting the urge to conform is to see the “end of sin” for what...it gives. It is often a horror show of tragic proportions that Satan keeps us from ever seeing.

I came across a poem a 21 year old female named Alicia Van Davis wrote. She lost her life addicted to crystal meth. After her death, those cleaning out her apartment opened her top dresser drawer and found a poem she had written. Thought the poem specifically addresses drug addiction, it is not very difficult to see its application to sexual addiction as well.

Meet Mr. and Mrs. Crystal Meth.
I destroy homes-I tear families apart.
I take your children and that’s just a start.
I’m more valued than diamonds, more precious than gold.
The sorrow I bring is a sight to behold.
If you need me, remember, I’m easily found.
I live all around you, in school and in town.
I live with the rich, I live with the poor.
I live just down the street and maybe next door.
I’m made in a lab, but not one like you think.
I can be made under the kitchen sink,
In your child’s closet, and even out in the woods.
If this scares you to death, then it certainly should.
I have many names. But there’s one you’ll know best.

I'm sure you've heard of me, my name is Crystal Meth.
 My power is awesome, try me, you'll see.
 But if you do, you may never break free.
 Just try me once and I might let you go.
 But if you try me twice, then I'll own your soul.
 When I posses you, you'll steal and you'll lie.
 You'll do what you have to do, just to get high.
 The crimes you commit for my narcotic charms,
 Will be worth the pleasure you feel in my arms.
 You'll lie to your mother; you'll steal from your dad.
 When you see their tears, you must feel sad.
 Just forget your morals and how you were raised.
 I'll be your conscience, I'll teach you my ways.
 I take kids from their parents; I take parents from their kids.
 I turn people from God, I separate friends.
 I'll take everything from you, your looks and your pride.
 I'll be with you always, right by your side.
 You'll give up everything, your family, your home.
 Your money, your true friend, then you'll be alone.
 I'll take and take till you have no more to give.
 When I finish with you, you'll be lucky to live.
 If you try me, be warned, this is not a game.
 If I'm given the chance, I'll drive you insane.
 I'll ravage your body; I'll control your mind.
 I'll own you completely; your soul will be mine.
 The nightmares I'll give you when you're lying in bed,
 And the voices you'll hear from inside your head.
 The sweats, the shakes, and the visions from me.
 I want you to know these things are gifts from me.
 But then it's too late, and you'll know in your heart
 That you are now mine and we shall not part.
 You'll regret that you tried me (they always do).
 But you came to me, not I to you.
 You knew this would happen.
 Many times you've been told.
 But you challenged my power,
 You chose to be bold.
 You could have said no and then walked away.
 If you could live that day over now, what would you say?
 My power is awesome, as I told you before.

I can take your life and make it so dim and sore.
 I'll be your master and you'll be my slave.
 I'll even go with you when you go to your grave.
 Now that you've met me, what will you do?
 Will you try me or not? It's all up to you.
 I can show you more misery than words can tell.
 Come take my hand, let me lead you to Hell.

2) Believe the gospel to be transformed and win

- Sex is not our problem. The heart, the mind, that is our problem.
- Jeremiah 17:9-10 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”
- Paul says our minds, our affections, need transforming, reordering, reprogramming by the making new daily of our minds. “Gospel thought patterns” need to be established and exercised daily so that we naturally, better supernaturally, think in accordance with the gospel.
- Five Mental Exercises to Get Us To The Mind Of Christ In the Area of Biblical Sexual Thinking:
 - 1) Repent and rehearse the gospel to yourself daily. Stay near the cross! Gal. 6:14 says, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

2) Train your mind to teach your eyes to stay above a woman's neck.

Job 31:1-2 says, "I have a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high?"

3) Fix your heart and mind on your wife and love her in the same way you love you. Eph. 5:28 says, "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

4) Saturate your mind with Scripture and good Christian literature.

Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

Garbage in and garbage out!

5) Pray the prayer of the godly evangelist Vance Havner who in his

80's dropped to his knees first thing every morning and prayed,

"Dear Lord, please help me this day not to be a dirty old man."

3) Believe the gospel to rest in God's will and kill sin

- Do you really believe God wants what is best for you in your sex life?

Really? Save yourself for marriage, be faithful in marriage?

- He does!

(God's will for sex)

- Maximum purity

- Maximum pleasure
- Maximum partnership
- Maximum protection

Conclusion and Summary: Some Biblical and Common Sense Strategies For Conquering Sexual Addictions

- 1) Recognize you may be lost and need to be saved. (John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Romans 19:1-10, 13).
- 2) Face the facts of sin and your addictions. Be honest and stop lying to God, yourself and others. (1 John 1:5-10).
- 3) Acknowledge sexual addiction as an idol of the heart and a dethroning of Jesus from His rightful place in your life as King. (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- 4) Realize Christian's sin and struggle with sin. So, swallow your pride (a very popular idol of the heart), admit your weakness, ask for God's grace, and seek a band of brothers who can hold you accountable.

“The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God...” (Psalm 10:4).

“Pride goes before destruction...” (Proverbs 16:18). “When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom (Proverbs 11:2).

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Isa 26:3, NKJV).

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all our care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

(1 Peter 5:6-7).

- 5) Cultivate the discipline of prayer without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17)
 - a. Confess all known sin (Psalm 51; Mark 7:20-23; 1 John 1:7-10)
 - b. Renounce conformity to the world
 - c. Passionately seek an intimate, love relationship with Jesus Christ (John 10:10, 15:5-12; Philippians 3:10-14).
 - d. Offer daily your body as a “living sacrifice” to God and your mind as His workshop (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20).
 - e. Worship God as an ongoing pattern of life (John 4:23-24; Romans 12:1; Philippians 3:3).
 - f. Thank and praise God. Thank Him for his grace and mercy revealed in the gospel, praise Him, and keep seeking His mercy (Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 4:2).
- 6) Read and memorize Scripture daily! (Psalm 19:119).

The following passages are very helpful in dealing with lust and sexual additions (Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Peter 2:11; Romans 8:13; Romans 6:12; 1 Corinthians 6:13; Galatians 5:17; Philippians 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:22; Psalm 101:2, 3; Proverbs 6:25-29; Proverbs 5:18-20; Proverbs 8:13; Job 31:104;

Matthew 5:8; Romans 8:6; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 6:18-19; 2 Corinthians 10:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; James 1:15; 4:3; 1 John 2:16.

- 7) Aggressively pursue accountability. Be proactive.

Although it is healthy to be ashamed of the sins you are involved in, don't let that shame become one of Satan's weapons to keep you trapped. Secrecy is often a Christian's biggest enemy, while confession can bring freedom and release from the bondage of an overwhelming sense of shame. Don't let your pride destroy you (Prov. 29:23; Mark 7:21; 2 Chr. 32:26). In an accountability relationship, you choose a confidant that you can be honest and open with about your addiction. Confess your sin (James 5:16). Be sure to choose someone of the same sex. Select a person that has some spiritual maturity in their walk with Christ.

- 8) Block Internet pornography.

- 9) Once more! Guard your heart and avoid temptations. Guard your heart with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23). Don't let the demonic realm influence your thought-life (Ephesians 6:12-20). If you give yourself to sinful fantasies and pursuits, you will become their slave (Romans 6:16).

“Turn your eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word” (Psalm 119:37).

Stephen Arterburn in his book *Every Man's Battle* talks about retraining the eyes to “bounce away” from visual things that stimulate lust in you. For men, this might mean you need to look away as soon as you see a scantily dressed female jogger. Don't fuel your lust. Remember: what you feed thrives and what you starve dies. A good habit can be formed in around two weeks, though for some of us it will take longer. O.K., I “will man up for the long haul!”

- 10) Read some good books that can help you.

Every Man's Battle by Stephen Arterburn, Fred Stoeker, Mike Yorkey

Shares the stories of dozens who have escaped the trap of sexual immorality (pornography, adultery, etc.) and presents a practical, detailed plan for recovery. This book is designed for both men and women.

When Good Men Are Tempted by Bill Perkins

A frank and realistic strategy for men to regain purity in the midst of a culture fraught with sexual temptation. Complete with “take action” steps, this book is a must for every man! The author (a pastor) candidly discusses his own struggles with sexual temptation and his desire to stay pure. Wives, this book has helped many women understand their mates' temptation and struggles.

Every Heart Restored, a Wife's Guide to Healing in the Wake of a Husband's Sexual Sin by Fred and Brenda Stoeker with Mike Yorkey, with Foreward by Stephen Arterburn. This is the book for every woman who has become a casualty in the fight for sexual purity. *Every Heart Restored* offers godly guidance and wisdom for any woman facing such personal betrayal.

Significant portions of this summary material was drawn from "Biblical Tips For Sexual Addictions" at ChristianAnswers.Net.