

Understanding and Conquering Sexual Sin

1. **INTRODUCTION:**¹

- a. **If you are a pastor you are a counselor and if you haven't counseled someone battling sexual sin, you will. Sexual temptation is everywhere (social media, internet, and television).** You cannot **avoid** all temptation, but you can learn to **handle** them biblically.
- b. **The bible has a lot to say about sexual sin. One truth is clear sexual sin brings consequences.**
 - i. **1 Corinthians 6:18–20**, “Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. **19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? **20** For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.”
- c. **Sexual sin and temptation is very deceiving. Your counselee needs to understand implicitly that the gospel provides hope for a person to change and grow.**
 - i. **Colossians 2:13–14**, “When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He made you alive together with Him**, having forgiven us all our transgressions, **14** having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”
 - ii. **Hebrews 4:15–16**, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. **16** Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

2. **ALL SEXUAL TEMPTATION BEGINS WITH OUR DESIRE (LUST).**

¹ Most notes are taken from the FAITH BIBLICAL COUNSELING MANUAL- Counseling with confidence and compassion. Additional notes provided by Dr. Ben Marshall, CHCC and Pastor Mark Barrett, MTs, M.Div. FCBC.

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- a. **James 1:13-15**, “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.” **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth **death**.”
 - i. Death of integrity, death of respect, death of marriage, death of the body, death of relationship to God.
 1. **Matthew 15:19** “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.”
- b. **Be aware of the tendency to excuse sexual sin. We must master our desires before they master us and make us slaves to sin.**
 - i. Remember, that **68%** of Christian men struggle with pornography. In fact, in a recent Barna research study (Jan 2020) **57%** of pastors and 64% of youth pastors admit they have struggled with porn, either currently or in the past. However, less than **1%** recommended telling their congregation.
 1. I have counseled everything from adultery, homosexuality, pedophilia, and hundreds of different types of deviant sexual fetishes. **So be prayed up, over prepared, and well read.**
- c. **Now remember that God gave us the ability to ‘desire,’ and not ALL desires are inherently sinful.**
 - i. **1 Timothy 3:1**, “It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he **desires** to do.”
 1. **ἐπιθυμῆι**: carries the idea of having an intense desire for some particular thing. Literally to **crave** something. Context determines whether that desire is negative or positive.
- d. **The truth is that we often enslave ourselves to foolishly chosen desires.**
 - i. **Romans 6:6** “knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

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- ii. **James 4:1**, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?”
- e. You need to get your counselee to see that their desires can be **controlled** and **changed**. They can **stop it** at any time. By the way, this is a **revelation** for almost all sex addicts.
 - i. **1 Thessalonians 4:4–5**, that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”
 - ii. **Galatians 5:16** “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”
- 3. **HELP THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE DOCTRINE OF SIN AND ITS PROCESS IN A HUMAN LIFE:**
 - a. Culturally sin now needs to be defined, even in the church: Normally, I can spend 30 minutes (90 min) in my first session just helping my counsees understand **what sin is in relation to God**. You have to help your counsees see that every act of sin as an act of secrete atheism in the heart.
 - i. As 17th century pastor Stephan Charnock writes, “*Sin implies that God is unworthy of a being. Every sin is a kind of cursing God in the heart; an aim at the destruction of the being of God; not actually, but virtually; not in the intention of every sinner, but in the nature of every sin. That affection which excites a man to break His law, would excite him to annihilate his being if it were in his power. A man in every sin aims to set up his own will as his rule, and his own glory as the end of his actions against the will and glory of God; and could a sinner attain his end, God would be destroyed. God cannot outlive his will and his glory; God cannot have another rule but His own will, nor another end but his own honor. Sin is called a turning the back upon God, a kicking against him, as if He were a slighter person than the meanest beggar.*”

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ii. “Sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). In other words, sin is living as if there is no law. If I am living as if there is no law, I am living as if there is no law giver. If I am living as if there is no law giver, I am living as if there is no God (clicking the mouse... something better than God).

1. **Helping your counselee understand the reality and devastation of sin is critical if they are to succeed** (Rom.8:8).

iii. If they allow sin to run unchecked in their daily life, personal holiness and Christian maturity will eluded them. **We need to help our counselee understand that they must continually put sin to death by yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit.**

1. **Proverbs 4:23**, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

a. **Every response to temptation is an act of worship.**

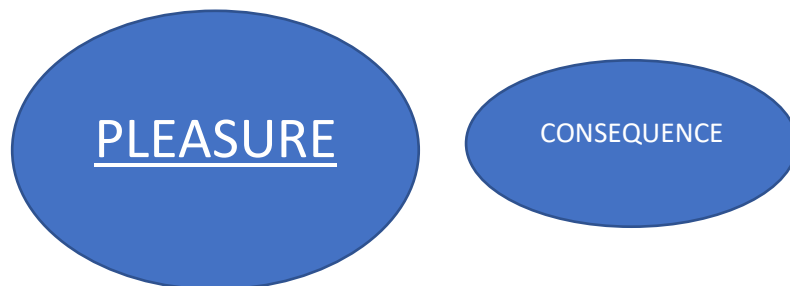
4. **ALL SEXUAL TEMPTATION AND SIN IS CHARACTERIZED BY DECEITFULNESS.**

a. **Proverbs 14:12**, “There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

b. Help your counselee develop a biblical view of pleasure and consequence.

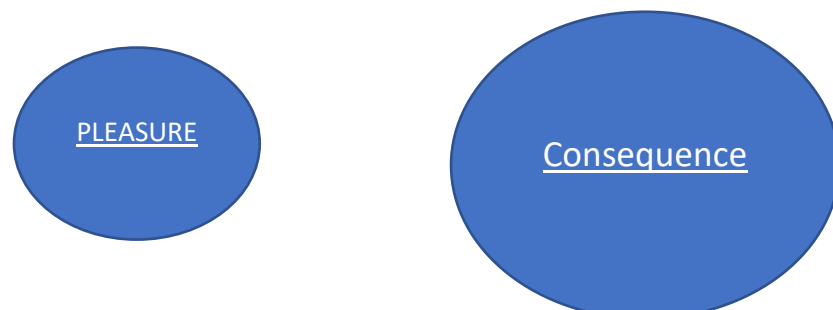
i. **Wrong view:**

1.



ii. **Biblical View:**

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- c. **A WRONG VIEW OF THE “RIGHTS” OF SEX AND THEIR “RIGHTS” TO SEX:**
- i. **1 Corinthians 7:1–5**, “Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. 3 The husband must **fulfill his duty to his wife**, and likewise also the **wife to her husband**. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise, also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your **lack of self-control**.
5. **THOSE IN SEXUAL SIN NEED TO DEVELOP A CROSS CENTERED LIFE, IMMEDIATELY:**
- a. **The cross covers our sin and should continue to motivate us to love God and obey His word.**
- i. **Romans 6:1–2** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May **it never be!** How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
- ii. **Romans 6:12–14**, Therefore **do not let sin reign** in your mortal body so that **you obey** its lusts, 13 and **do not go on presenting** the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but **present yourselves to God** as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
- iii. **Questions to ask the counselee:**
1. **Where is the cross in my life?**
 2. **Are you going to sin with the blood of Christ dripping down your computer screen?**
 3. **Are you going to click that mouse and drive another nail into Jesus?**

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- b. **Are they thinking about the cross daily? Flush that out in every session.**
 - i. **Galatians 6:14**, “But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”
 - 1. **Success lies in the moments** (Luke 9:23): We don’t futurize our faith and in order for our counselees to be successful they must learn to live out their Christian faith in the moments. This is where success exist. **The cross is essential to my everyday life...the need to get this!**
 - a. **Luke 9:23**, “And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny** himself, and take up his cross **daily** and **follow** Me.”
 - c. **Help them see the correlation between their sin and the cross:**
 - i. **Hebrews 12:1–2** Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the **author** and **perfecter** of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
6. **Encourage them so that they see that sexual sin can be prevented and /or overcome through Christ.**
- a. Do this by helping them to see and understand that God’s will is that the cease to submit to sexual immorality. Let them know that they can stop it.
 - i. **1 Thessalonians 4:1–5**, “Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. 2 For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that

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each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”

ii. **Galatians 5:16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

b. **Eliminating sexual sin requires precise surgery, it requires “uncompromising” amputation.** This is **especially** important.

i. **Matthew 5:29**, “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

1. You can’t handle them with kit gloves...be direct, be biblical, be compassionate. Remember 3 strikes and you’re out!

a. 3 appointments missed.

b. 3 homework assignments missed.

c. Stop counseling them and pursue the steps of church discipline.

c. **What is their biblical view of God?** This is critical, right theology produces right doxology. Remember God loves your counselee and has provided everything they need in Christ to be victorious.

i. **2 Peter 1:2–3**, Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

1. **God is omni-present: Proverbs 5:21**, For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths.

2. **God omniscient: Ezekiel 11:5** “Then the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and He said to me, “Say, ‘Thus says the LORD, “So you think, house of Israel, for I know your thoughts.”

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3. **God is just: He will judge my life:** Jeremiah 17:10 “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.
7. **WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IS RESTORATION (LEADERSHIP)? HELP THEM PURSUE THE RESTORATION PROCESS:**
 - a. **Galatians 6:1** Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.
 - i. **Restoration includes confession and repentance.**
 1. **Luke 14:4** But they kept silent. And He took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away.
 2. **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 3. **Psalms 139:23–24** Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.
8. **THINGS TO REMEMBER -Dr. Ben Marshall**
 - a. **ROOT PROBLEM:** Addiction is a worship disorder at the root and is usually NOT about the activity of sexual pleasure. Sexual sin more often than not is not about pleasure, it is about control, supremely it is the worship of self over God.
 - i. **Masturbation is the closest thing to homosexuality, self pleasure.**
 - b. **THE GOAL:** Christlikeness
 - c. **POTENTIAL EMOTIONS TO BE AWARE OF:** Fear, Depression, Anger
 - d. **POTENTIAL HEART IDOLS:** Pleasure, safety, escape.
 - e. **DIAGRAMS: Idols of the Heart.**
 - i. **Does the sin take the place of God?**
 - ii. **Do I value that sin more than God?**
 - iii. **What am I willing to do to satisfy that lust?**
 1. **Am I willing to sin in order to get it?**

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- a. **Romans 13:14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.
 - f. **Addicts Are Blinds**: Most sex addicts are blind to their sin, the gravitas of it. They are blind to how this impacts their relationship to God, and others. Often men enslaved to pornography **departmentalize** their sin and justify it because other areas of their lives are going well. They don't realize how many people are being hurt in the wake of their sin.
 - i. **When is an addict lying?** Every time they open their mouths.
9. **Take your time the repentance process:**
- a. **CONTEMPLATION**: You will need to take two to three weeks with this step due to the fact that most of the time, they have had to purposefully ignore and every relationship in their life. These relationships would include God, spouse, children, extended family, fellow believers, co-workers, and neighbors.
 - i. They will need to spend time studying the scriptures to see how they have sinned against God and others.
 - ii. They will need to interview their loved ones so they can know for sure just how they have sinned against others.
 - iii. They will need to write a contemplation letter explaining to you what they have come to learn about their sin and God through this process.
 - b. **CONFESSION**: Once the contemplation letter is complete, they can write a confession letter to God and their loved ones explaining in their own words how they have sinned against them, as well as asking for forgiveness. The addict should be patient with their loved ones. If the loved one does not grant forgiveness with them right away, the addict should understand this is just as much of a process for their loved ones as it is for them.
 - c. **CHANGE**: The process of change found in Ephesians 4:22-24 should be very intricate for the addict. You should go through every area of their life to find out what needs to be put off and put on.

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10. **THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN SINNED AGAINST GREATLY:** Try to help family members understand the nature of addiction so they can respond to the offender in a biblical manner.
11. **HELP THEM GUARD THEIR HEART AND MIND:**
 - a. **Proverbs 4:23**, Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.
 - b. **2 Corinthians 10:5** We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought **captive to the obedience of Christ.**
12. **HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THAT ACCOUNTABILITY IS VITALLY IMPORTANT:**
 - a. **Romans 15:14**, “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.”