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Volume 3 – 2011

**The Use of the Concept of New Identity in Christ in
Counseling Sexual Addiction in Young Men**

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A. Understanding the Nature of Sex

When a fire is contained in a fireplace it is nice and cozy for all. But, when a fire moves outside the fire place into the house it destroys the home. So it is with sex. When it is contained within the limits of marriage it can be nice and cozy. But when sex moves beyond the limits of marriage, it will cause damage to you and the other person involved. It can literally destroy the home! Now let's evaluate sex with God's perspective in mind.

The Bible tells us that all things are for Him, through Him, and to Him (Rom 11:36). Therefore, God has a design and a plan for everything created. This plan included sex. We can identify as least three reasons why God designed sex.

First, we see that God designed sex for procreation (Genesis 1:28). It is through sex that the world is populated. God called Adam

¹ Portions of this Article are adapted from the *Books Happy Even After and With All Your Heart* by Nicolas Ellen.

and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. In order for man and woman to be fruitful and multiply there has to be a lot of sex!

Second, God designed sex to be a pleasurable experience between husband and wife alone (Song of Solomon 4:1-5:1, Hebrews 13:4). This is a time where they can touch each other in ways that are pleasurable and intimate for both. There is a lot God intended for husband and wife to explore in their sexual intimacy—things that are to be kept between them alone.

Third, God designed sex as an avenue for husband and wife to become one (Gen 2:24-25). Sexual intimacy promotes unity, togetherness, and companionship in a pleasurable way. It allows for natural desires to be satisfied in a legitimate way.

As a result sex needs to be valued and understood in light of God's plan instead of man's tradition. The way the world has viewed and used sex leads us away from God's plan and into danger. Sex outside of God's plan is unlawful.

B. Understanding Unlawful Sex

Unlawful sex can be defined as any sex outside of marriage. Adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest, rape, prostitution, voyeurism, pornography, bestiality, exhibitionism, or sado-masochism are all forms of sexual sin and are unlawful (Hebrews 13:4). There are four things we must consider about unlawful sex.

First, God will judge all who have sex outside of marriage and use people as objects to gratify their pleasure and excitement (1Thessalonians 4:4-6). Although we are not sure as to how God will judge, we know that there are many consequences to sex outside of marriage. For example, how many relationships have you seen where people don't trust each other? They always think the other person is out having sex with someone else. Why would they think that way? Because that was how that person was with them. I have seen many relationships where lack of trust and bad sex occurs in the marriage as a result of sex outside the marriage. Is this God's judgment? We don't know, but it sure seems like it.

Second, those who choose to have sex outside of marriage will bring destruction on themselves (Proverbs 5:1-23). Consider people who have poor sex in marriage because they are comparing their sexual encounters with sex partners they had in the past. If they had not had sex outside of marriage, they would not be able compare it to

their spouse. I have even heard of spouses giving their mates sexually transmitted diseases. Sex outside of marriage has led to divorce, children from illegitimate relationships, and even murder.

Third, the body is the temple of God. Therefore, any sex that does not line up with God's plan is unlawful, ungodly, and will defile your body (1Cor 6:12-20). It is sin against your own body and it can create other problems. It causes you to have a union with someone with whom you are not committed. You are subjecting the temple of God to sexual impurity. Do you see the danger in that? Since you are the Body of Christ, you take Christ with you everywhere you go. Christ is right there with you in everything you do. When you are engaging in sexual sin you are taking Christ with you!

Fourth, if you are walking in sexual sin, you are not fulfilling the will of God, which is your sanctification (1 Thes 4: 3-8). We as Christians are called to walk in sanctification and honor. We are called to imitate Jesus Christ in our life and teachings. Sexual sin contradicts God's will. You cannot say you are walking with Christ and walk in sexual sin at the same time! You must repent and turn back to what is right in the sight of the Lord.

C. Understanding Your Identity and Sexual Sin

2 Corinthians 5: reveals that if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior from sin and Lord of your life, you are now a new creature in Jesus Christ. You have been reconciled to a new and right relationship with Jesus Christ. 1John 3: reveals that if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ you are now called a child of God. As a result of this new position, your hope should be fixed on what we are to receive at the glorious coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Romans 6 reveals that since you are now in union with Jesus Christ you are to walk in his power and not allow sin to dominate your life. Colossians 3: encourages that since you have a your new position in Jesus Christ you are to put aside evil passions and the practice of sin.

Basically when it comes to sexual sin you must come to terms with who you are in Jesus Christ and what you have in Jesus Christ to address the problem of sexual sin. Your new position and power in Jesus Christ allows you the ability to address your sexual sin in a way that is pleasing to God and helpful to you. The reality is that you have power because of your position. However, having the position and power but lacking motivation will leave you paralyzed in overcoming

sexual sin. Until you are able to embrace and enjoy your identify and fellowship with God you will more than likely be lacking in your efforts to overcoming sexual sin. Let us consider this concept further.

D. Your Identity and the Passion of Walking In It

Because of who you are and the resource you have in Jesus Christ, you can overcome sexual sin. However, there must be a motivation to do so. Consider this, sexual sin deprives you of the ability to walk in the fullness of joy and pleasures evermore found through our position and fellowship in Jesus Christ.² God wants you to find your satisfaction in your fellowship with Him (John 6:35). Overcoming sexual sin boils down to a person embracing the reality that all that God has to offer in Christ Jesus will bring more satisfaction than any sexual sin can. Because of who you are in Jesus Christ, you have access to a joy and pleasure in Jesus Christ that far outweighs the pleasure of sexual sin.

When you can find your way to enjoying the presence of God through your new identify in Jesus Christ there will be an overcoming of sexual sin. This does not take away the fact that you are called to resist sexual and walk in sexual purity whether you feel motivated it or not. It just adds to the point that motivation to overcome sexual sin goes beyond duty to obey to delight in who Christ is, who you are and what you have in fellowship with God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You are a Child of God that has access to the Eternal God of creation. This access is to lead us into a new word of pleasure that comes through our obedience to Jesus Christ. As one puts aside sexual sin and pursues understanding, embracing, and submitting to God according to their new identity in Jesus Christ, there will be deliverance from sexual sin and true joy and satisfaction through fellowship in Jesus Christ. Given this let us consider some key principles on how to overcome sexual sin.

E. Overcoming Sexual Sin

Our change must be based on two key objectives, or it will not be a lasting change. The first objective for change must be to establish a right relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. In order to

² Sam Storms, *Pleasures Evermore: The Life-changing Power of Enjoying God* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2000), 230.

establish a right relationship with God the Father, we must come to embrace and to accept by faith the person and finished work of His Son Jesus Christ. We must embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Consider this:

1. Jesus Christ who is God and the Son of God took on the form of a man (See John 1:14-18).
2. Jesus Christ took on the form of a man to pay the penalty for sins of the human race (See Hebrews 10:1-18).
3. Through Christ's physical death on the Cross, literal burial and resurrection from physical death, Jesus paid the penalty for the sins of mankind (See Acts 2:22-36).
4. Christ's physical death on the Cross, literal burial, and resurrection from physical death result in the deliverance from the penalty of sin and power of sin for those who put their faith (trust/confidence) in the person and work of Jesus Christ (See Romans 5:1 and Romans 6:1-15).
5. Christ's physical death on the Cross, literal burial and resurrection from physical death, result in being delivered from the presence of sin for those who put their faith (trust/confidence) in the person and work of Jesus Christ (See Revelation 21:1-27).
6. Christ's physical death on the Cross, literal burial and resurrection from physical death result in resurrection into a heavenly body like Jesus and being with Him forever for those who put their faith(trust/confidence) in the person and work of Jesus Christ (See Philippians 3:17-21).
7. Christ's physical death on the Cross, literal burial and resurrection, from physical death result in salvation unto a right relationship with God in order to know Him intimately, become like Him, and to be useful to Him for those who put their faith (trust/confidence) in the person and work of Jesus Christ (See Philippians 3:7-11 and Ephesians 2:1-10).

Hearing the Gospel should lead us to repentance. Repentance can be defined as the act of changing one's mind and action towards sin. Because Jesus laid the foundation, one is able to turn away from sin and have a right relationship with God. God, the Father's kindness, and creation of sorrow in one's heart leads one to repentance (See Romans 2:4 and 2 Corinthians 7:10). Unless repentance is granted by God, one is not able to repent (See 2 Timothy 2:25). Through repentance, one is able to receive forgiveness of sins which leads them to spiritual life (See Luke 24:27 and Acts 11:18). True repentance starts with Godly sorrow. Godly sorrow can be defined as having a grief over sin. A person is grieved over the reality that he has offended the almighty God. This person has a sense of guilt with a desire and will to turn away from that which has offended God. The person is sorrowful because of offending God, not because of the punishment that he will get. It is not merely feeling bad and seeing it differently. It

is feeling bad, seeing it from God's perspective, and turning away from that sin. It is remorse over sin and abhorrence of the sin which results in change of purpose and life away from sin to fellowship with God and living as God wants. Repentance will lead us to:

1. listen to the validity of the Gospel message (See Romans 10:1-17).
2. affirm or stand in it by turning from sin and putting our trust/confidence in this reality about Jesus Christ (See 2 Corinthians 7:10).
3. be steadfast in the conviction that we are saved from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and soon the presence of sin (See Romans 6:1-15).
4. be steadfast in the hope of the return of Jesus Christ knowing that when He returns, we will receive a heavenly body like Christ's (See Romans 8:18-25).
5. be steadfast in the conviction that we are saved unto a right relationship with God in order to know Him intimately, to be conformed to the image of Christ and to be useful to Him (See John 3:16, 17:3, Ephesians 4:11-17 and Romans 7:4-6).
6. a desire to pursue and to know God intimately unless we did not have a sincere faith (See Philippians 3:1-16).
7. a faith that is working itself out in obedience to God and love for others; unless, we did not have a sincere faith (See Galatians 5:5-6;13).

The second objective for change must be to put on attitudes and actions of love for God and others resulting in becoming like Jesus Christ as a result (See Ephesians 5:1-21, 1Corinthians 13:1-8, and 1John 2:3-17).

These two objectives should lead us to work on change through the power of God working within us in five key areas of our lives. (See Philippians 2:12-13). First, we must work on changing our thought patterns. We have developed attitudes, motives, and desires in our minds that must be changed. We must begin to think like Christ in those areas of our lives (See Romans 12:2-3). Secondly, we must work on changing our communication and conversation. We must learn how to speak wholesomely. We must learn how to speak in order to glorify God and to build up others. Thirdly, we must work on changing our behavior and lifestyle. Our behavior and lifestyle should reflect the behavior and lifestyle of Christ in all aspects. The way that we act and live should be indicative of the Kingdom Agenda of God, not the world before us (See Philippians 3:1-21). Fourth, we must work on changing our relational patterns. We must learn to relate in open and loving ways to others. To be open and loving is to be transparent with others in a loving manner about our concerns and their sins. It is speaking the truth in love. We must reflect the love that

Christ has for us in how we relate to other people. Our relationships must be established around God's objectives instead of our objectives (See 1John 4:7-21). Fifth, we must work on our stewardship. We must learn to use our talents, treasures, spiritual gifts, and temples to glorify God. We are not our own, and everything that we have we received. Therefore, we must learn to use these things to glorify God and not to gratify the flesh (See 1 Corinthians 10:31).

In order for true change to take place, we must gain a biblical understanding of some very key areas of life. First, we must gain a biblical understanding of who God is, and what he commands. Many of the problems people face in life are because they have not come to grasp a true knowledge of God and His will. They live as if life revolves around them. Secondly, we must gain a biblical understanding of who we are, and who we are not; then, submit to God accordingly. We need a sober assessment of ourselves. In other words we need to have the right perspective of ourselves, and the only way that we can receive that perspective is through the Word of God. Thirdly, we must gain a biblical understanding of human nature and handle people accordingly. Until we understand mankind from God's perspective, we will mistreat and mishandle mankind. Theology, not psychology, is what we need to understand and love mankind as God wills. Fourth, we must gain a biblical understanding of life's situations and circumstances. We must learn the reality of life according to God and learn to live with it in accordance to God's will. Without a biblical understanding in these areas, it is very difficult to deal with and to turn from idolatrous lusts in your life.

So far we have learned our objectives for change: the five areas where we need to change, and the areas where biblical understanding must be acquired. All this must be worked out in a process that is applied on a habitual basis. The process is learned from the teachings of 2 Timothy 3:16-17,

All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequately equipped for every good work.

Through the Word of God, we are able to grow and change into well-equipped, mature Christians. We can function in a manner that is God-honoring and well-pleasing. If we use the Word of God according to which is stated in this text, we will be able to turn from

sexual sin and walk in right relationship with God and others. The text mentioned that Scripture is profitable for teaching (knowledge of the objective truth), reproof (conviction of what is wrong), correction (helping you to turn from sin patterns), and training in righteousness (helping you walk in right patterns of living that honor God). From this we can develop a process that we must practice on a habitual basis:

1. We must habitually learn what is right according to Scripture

- A. We must learn the Doctrines of the Christian Faith (See 2 John 1:1-11).
- B. We must learn the Duties of the Christian Faith (See Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:42-47, Galatians 6:1-2, and 1 Peter 3:15).
- C. We must learn the Disciplines of the Christian Faith (See 2 Peter 1:5-11).

2. We must habitually be convicted of what is wrong according to Scripture

- A. We must be honest with ourselves and God about the sinful thought patterns that we have developed and have been made aware of from Scripture (See James 1:13-15).
- B. We must be honest with ourselves and God about the sinful communication patterns that we have developed and have been made aware of from Scripture (See James 3:1-12).
- C. We must be honest with ourselves and God about the sinful behavior patterns that we have developed and have been made aware of from Scripture (See James 3:13-16).
- D. We must be honest with ourselves and God about the sinful relational patterns that we have developed and have been made aware of from Scripture (See James 4:1-10).
- E. We must be honest with ourselves and God about our service to God (See Hebrews 12:28-29).

3. We must habitually turn from what is wrong according to Scripture

- A. We must put off sinful thought patterns (See 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).
- B. We must put off sinful communication patterns (See Ephesians 4:29).
- C. We must put off sinful behavior patterns (See Colossians 3:1-7).
- D. We must put off sinful relational patterns (See Colossians 3:8-9).
- E. We must put off sinful serving patterns (See Hebrews 12:28-29).

4. We must habitually train in what is right according to Scripture.

- A. We must train in developing godly thought patterns (See Romans 12:2-3).
- B. We must train in developing godly communication patterns (See Ephesians 4:29).
- C. We must train in developing godly behavioral patterns (See 1 Peter 2:11-3:22).

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- D. We must train in developing godly relational patterns (See Colossians 3:12-17).
- E. We must train in using our spiritual gifts to serve others (See Romans 12:3-8).



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