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***Broken Sexuality or Real Intimacy***

(Num 25; 2 Sam 11; 1 Cor 6:9,12-20)

“Illicit sex is an idol in our generation.”

 (Derek Rishmawy CAPC, 2013)

“The major obstacle to church revival is unhealthy, sinful sexuality”

 (Tim Keller)

“The impact of viewing pornography hijacks the normal functioning of the brain and the maladaptive patterns we adopt have profound psychological and behavioural effects. It affects not only how we form memories and make attachments but also how we understand sexuality and how we view each other.”

 (Dr. William Struthers; the Effects of Porn on the Male Brain, Christian Research Journal, vol. 34, no.5, 2011)

Sexual brokenness is always symptomatic of a lapse in intimacy with God - sexual sin isn’t the cause of our intimacy problem with God, it is the sign that our relationship with God is already in trouble. Idolatry always precedes immorality Num. 25:1-2; 2 Sam 10:19-11:4; 1 Cor. 6:9.

An idolatry problem means we have a sexual immorality, adultery problem, which means a gigantic intimacy problem and a humongous spiritual/revival problem which means mega-relational problems.

 ***What can we do?***

 1. Flee sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:12-20)

 2. Upsize sexual generosity in marriage (1 Cor 7:1-5)

 3. Use Singleness to establish real intimacy with God (1 Cor 7:32-38)

1. **Flee sexual immorality** (1 Cor 6:12-20)

Sex is not just another biological function in response to a biological appetite (ie. food for the stomach) - God defined and designed sex so two people could “become one flesh” - sex binds two people in a complete personal union. Biblical sex is self-giving not self-fulfilling.

Sexual sin is a two-way attack - a sin against someone else and against one’s own physiology

(1 Cor 6:18).

“The male brain seems to be built in such a way that visual cues that have sexual relevance have a hypnotic effect on him… form a neurological memory that will influence future processing and response to sexual cues… (including) binding him to the objects he is focusing on.” (Struthers, 2011)

The purpose of sex, for which God will dance over, is to accurately portray the unbreakable intimacy within the Trinity and the binding covenant of self-giving intimacy between Christ and his people.

“He who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in the spirit” (6:17)

At the Lord’s table, we renew our covenant with the self-giving Christ, promising that we are his self-giving subjects. “Sex is a covenant renewal ceremony for marriage.”

It pictures our covenantal loyalty to Christ by its truthfulness to our marriage. Every act of sexual immorality/adultery is a consummation of our idolatry - disloyalty to Christ.

By sexually dining at the demon’s table (see 1 Cor 10:14-22) we state that neither Christ nor our spouse is sufficient; dishonouring the Lord with our bodies (6:20)--effectively disengaging from our union with Christ in spirit and with our spouse to binding mastery to another (6:15,16).

“Pornography thus enslaves the viewer to an image, hijacking the biological response intended to bond a man to his wife and therefore inevitably loosening that bond. It also alters the chemical medium of the entire body in profound ways…and results in a greater degree of need.” (Struthers)

Honour the Lord with our bodies; the holy temple of our total self-giving Christ!

*It starts with spouses agreeing to be partners in the solution rather than accomplices in the mess.*

2. **Upsize sexual generosity in marriage** (1 Cor7:1-5)

* Help each other honour God first with our minds and hearts, so honour with our bodies will follow.

 More God, not more sex, is the starting point for sexual health.

Rebuild intimacy with God by establishing right thinking about permissibility, beneficial, acceptable behaviours in your partnership:

 -Permissibility only exists in non-essentials, matters of scriptural silence; Christian ethics are fixed

 -Anything that jeopardizes freedom to belong exclusively to God is to be rejected as not beneficial

 -Any behaviour that has a high degree of addictive mastery is not acceptable.

* Generous, exclusive sexual expression within marriage…

…mirrors the joy of the relationship of the triune of God, points to the ecstasy of our eternal state, and protects us from sexual predators.

3. **In the matter of intimacy with God, singleness is an advantage** - use singleness to establish real intimacy with God and to break down any idols that will tempt you to sin (1 Cor 7:32-38; Col 3:4,5)

In the arena of social connections will you take your cues from the culture or your Creator?

*Put to death false gods - sex, marriage, independence, freedom, material advantage*

Singleness is a time to put all of your hope and trust in Christ (1 Cor 7:20-24)

 -Preserve purity (v19) as a symbol of loyalty to Christ alone and the possibility of a future mate.

-Repent of any sexual impurity as a renewal of covenant purity and loyalty to establish a posture of victory for your future.

 -Use the time of singleness to experience the truth that real intimacy is not dependent on sex.

 -Develop your commitment to live for maximum kingdom impact whether marriage comes or not.

**What must we do?**

* Admit that the symptoms indicate that you have moved away from Christ by welcoming idols to replace Him.
* Own up to your sin - confess to the Lord.
* Repent by making a 180 degree change in your life - producing fruit keeping with the true repentance (cf Acts 19:17-20)
* Decide to talk tactics, lifestyle choices, and changes with your spouse or spiritual mentor if single - loving partners must be part of the solution with each other or you remain part of the problem.