

The Christian Woman's Secret Struggle with Sexual Sin and
How the Church Is Not Helping

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Abstract

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Young Christian girls and women are enslaved to sexual sins, including pornography, masturbation, same-sex attraction, fornication, and fantasy. However, due to the silence on sexual sins, lack of biblical teaching, and transparency, women do not feel like they can confess their sins and receive the help they need to overcome. The focus has historically been placed on young boys and men when it comes to sexual sins. The Church has not adequately taught about a woman's sexuality in context with purity as a heart issue concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ must be the focus with the Holy Spirit as the power.

This project is meant to be a helpful tool to the parent, layperson, counselor, and women struggling with sexual sins. It gives context to the struggle and helps one understand where we have gone wrong. It helps us to put the focus back where it needs to be, Christ. The bible is sufficient to lead and guide those dealing with sexual sins as it contains all that we need on life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).

I pray that the Christian community would create space for women to confess their sexual sins knowing there is grace for them. I pray that more women would be transparent about their struggles and that they would boldly testify of goodness, grace, and freedom that God gives to the women enslaved to sin. I desire that young girls and women won't believe the lie that they are alone and that there is no way out. That they would confidently believe they are no longer slaves to sin because of the work of Christ on the cross. Through the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, there is hope for biblical change and freedom.

I. INTRODUCTION

a. Purpose Statement

- i. This thesis aims to provide context regarding the Christian woman's struggle with sexual sins, the world's influence, expose the Church's reaction of silence and the way it helps keep women enslaved in these sins, and provide a biblical framework for the way forward.
- ii. We live in a culture obsessed with sex, and over the last several decades, it has championed women freely expressing their sexual desires. It has pushed back against the false idea that men are the only ones who have sexual desires and encourages women to indulge in theirs. The world's view of sex and sexuality has infiltrated the lives of Christian women and is often the only source from which girls and women learn about sex and sexuality.
- iii. The church/Christian community has lacked in teaching a biblical perspective on sex and sexuality. It has become a taboo topic that people shy away from speaking on. However, when the Church does speak, it focuses on the excesses of sex in the world and fails to deliver a balanced biblical perspective. Rather than shedding light on sex as a gift from God in the parameters of marriage, we only hear negativity, and it sends a mixed message.

b. Intended Audience and Scope

- i. The intended audience is the body of Christ. Everyone will benefit from this study, whether a young woman who struggles with sexual sin or the

church leader or parent who needs to learn how to shepherd girls and women through these waters.

1. Church leaders and parents
 - a. It will help them understand that girls and women have sexual desires and struggle with sexual sins too.
 - b. It will show the need for biblical teaching on sex, sexuality, and sexual sins, acknowledging that silence on the subject allows the world to be the leading guide.
 - c. It will equip them to walk alongside girls and women who struggle with sexual sin—showing them how to respond biblically and help by giving grace and pointing them to Christ, who is the only way to freedom over these sins.
2. Young girls and women.
 - a. It will teach them how to think biblically and develop biblical convictions about sex and sexuality.
 - b. It will debunk the myth that sexual sins are a man's issue and that girls and women are alone in their struggle.
 - c. It will give hope to those who are enslaved to sexual sin, showing the way to freedom through the word of God and his Holy Spirit.
- ii. This research intends to bring awareness that women struggle with sexual sins, not just men. Shine a light on the need for biblical teaching on sex and sexuality in the Church and the home. To show the impact of the

world and purity culture on girls and women and how we need to uproot the lies and replace them with biblical truth.

c. Sexual Sins

i. Pornography

1. Sexually explicit materials intended to arouse.¹
2. Usually refers to representations designed to arouse and give sexual pleasure to those who read, see, hear, or handle them.²

ii. Masturbation

1. Erotic stimulation, especially of one's genital organs, commonly resulting in orgasm and is achieved by manual or another bodily contact exclusive of sexual intercourse, by instrumental manipulation, occasionally by sexual fantasies, or by various combinations of these agencies.³

iii. Sexual Fantasy

1. Private mental imagery associated with explicitly erotic feelings, accompanied by a physiologic response to sexual arousal; a sexual fantasy may be defined as an erotic yearning or constellation of mental images that evoke sexual arousal.⁴

¹ Nelson, K. M., & Rothman, E. F. (2020, February). *Should Public Health Professionals Consider Pornography a Public Health Crisis?* American journal of public health. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6951382/>.

² Joseph Wade. "Readings & Links - The Definition Of Pornography | FRONTLINE – PBS" accessed July 8, 2021. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/porn/etc/definition.html>

³ Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

⁴ Farlex. (n.d.). *Sexual fantasies*. The Free Dictionary. <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Sexual+fantasies>.

2. Sexual - Related to the activity of having sex.⁵
3. Fantasy - A pleasant situation that you enjoy thinking about but is unlikely to activity or imagining things like this.⁶

iv. Fornication

1. Consensual sexual intercourse between two persons not married to each other.⁷

v. Same-sex attraction

d. Research Methodology

- i. The majority of the research will be done through library resources, internet searches, and interviews.

II. THE IMPACT OF THE HISTORICAL VIEW OF SEXUALITY

a. The Original Purity Culture in the Roman Empire.

- i. There were two fates for women that were fundamental to ancient sexual ideologies.

1. One fate was promiscuity and shame, which was exemplified in the prostitute. The second is chastity and honor, which was seen in the virgin and the matron.⁸

- a. Modesty, pudicitia in Latin, summarizes the code of female sexual morality. Harper states, “For a woman, the “single

⁵ Cambridge English Dictionary: Definitions & Meanings. (n.d.). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). Merriam-Webster’s collegiate dictionary. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

⁸ Kyle Harper. From Shame to Sin. Harvard University Press, 2013.

ornament, the noblest beauty, unravaged by age, the highest honor,” was pudicitia.”⁹

- b. Harper states, “Social status and sexual behavior were inseparably fused, and the *materfamilias* was defined by a mode of being, visibly projected in her comportment and appearance.”¹⁰

- b. The Double Standard

- i. Sexual morality for men in the Roman Empire was "permissive, based on social status, and sexual desire could be fulfilled in a myriad of ways."¹¹
 - 1. Men were expected to treat their sexual desire like an appetite, satisfying it whenever desired. ¹²
 - 2. It was a strong belief in the Roman Empire that prostitution prevented adultery. Harper states, "that the prostitute’s body acted as a safety valve for male lust."¹³

- c. The Christian’s Sexual Ethics in the Ancient Church

- i. The Christian sexual revolution brought sexual behavior to the forefront of morality. Harper states, “Sexual deviance went from something with social ramifications to a sin that was grievous in the sight of God and could have eternal ramifications.”¹⁴

⁹ Kyle Harper. From Shame to Sin. Harvard University Press, 2013.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Kevin DeYoung, “The First Sexual Revolution: The Triumph of Christian Morality in the ..,” accessed July 11, 2021, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/first-sexual-revolution-triumph-Christian-morality-roman-empire/>.

¹² Timothy Keller, “The First Christian Sexual Revolution | Our Daily Bread Ministries,” accessed July 11, 2021, <https://ourdailybread.org/the-first-christian-sexual-revolution/>.

¹³ Kyle Harper. From Shame to Sin. (Harvard University Press, 2013.)

¹⁴ Kyle Harper. From Shame to Sin. (Harvard University Press, 2013.)

1. The Christian sexual ethic was summed up by Harper as, “virginity was ideal, marriage acceptable, sex beyond marriage sinful, same-sex eros categorically forbidden.”¹⁵
 - ii. April Kelly states in the article *Early Christianity’s Concept of Sexuality*, “While Christianity was trying to reframe and redefine the way men and women related to each other, it was difficult to separate themselves from the overarching mindsets of society.”¹⁶
- d. The Puritans View of Sexuality
 - i. They fought against the beliefs of the ancient Church. They abandoned the idea that marriage was secondary to celibacy. They taught against the idea that sex between a husband and wife was a necessary evil to have children.¹⁷
 - ii. In Dr. Joel R. Beeke’s *Living for God’s Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism*, he states what the reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin taught, “Marital love must be sexual so that both marital partners can give themselves fully to each other with joy and exuberance in a healthy relationship marked by fidelity.”¹⁸

III. FROM ONE EXTREME TO THE NEXT

¹⁵ Kevin DeYoung, “The First Sexual Revolution: The Triumph of Christian Morality in the ...,” accessed July 11, 2021, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/first-sexual-revolution-triumph-Christian-morality-roman-empire/>.

¹⁶ April Kelly, “*Early Christianity’s Concept of Sexuality*,” accessed August 3, 2021. <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/article/priscilla-papers-academic-journal/early-christianity-concept-sexuality>

¹⁷ Nathan W. Bingham, “*The Puritan’s View of Sex in Marriage*,” accessed July 21, 2021.

¹⁸ Nathan W. Bingham, “*The Puritan’s View of Sex in Marriage*,” accessed July 21, 2021. <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/sex-in-marriage/>.

a. The Sexual Revolution

i. For many feminists, male supremacy and male sexuality were seen as the problem. Kassian states, “Feminists reasoned that the demise of patriarchy would bring about women’s fulfillment and allow them to become whole.”¹⁹

1. In the journal *Toward a Feminist Sexual Revolution*, Ellen Willis states, “The suppression of women’s sexual desire and pleasure, the denial of our right to control reproduction, and the enforcement of female abstinence outside marriage have been together with our exclusion from equal participation in economic and political activity – primary underpinnings of male supremacy.”²⁰

2. The traditional patriarchal was seen to regulate the relations between males and females, supporting male domination and female subordination.²¹

ii. The sexual revolution aimed to counter these traditional views and pursue meaning, wholeness, and equality for women.²² Feminists wanted to overcome the double standard that worked against women. In *The Feminist Mistake* by Mary Kassian states that the double standard

¹⁹ April Kelly, “*Early Christianity’s Concept of Sexuality*,” accessed August 3, 2021. <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/article/priscilla-papers-academic-journal/early-christianity-concept-sexuality>

²⁰ Ellen Willis, “Toward a Feminist Sexual Revolution,” *Social Text*, no. 6 (1982): 3-21, accessed July 21, 2021, DOI: 10.2307/466614.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ellen Willis, “Toward a Feminist Sexual Revolution,” *Social Text*, no. 6 (1982): 3-21, accessed July 21, 2021, DOI: 10.2307/466614.

“condemned women to public obloquy while exonerating men for the same (sexual misdeeds).”²³

1. Kassian states, “Mitchell proposed that sexuality contributed to the oppression of women because men were allowed sexual freedom, but women were not.”²⁴
 2. Feminists spoke out against the outdated ideas about women's sexuality. They wanted to shed light on how women enjoy sex and have sexual desires just like men.
 3. Ellen Willis states that sexual freedom included "the right to express our sexual needs freely, to engage in sexual activity for our pleasure, to have sex and bear children outside to control our fertility, to refuse sex with any particular man or all men, to be lesbians.”²⁵
- iii. Feminists believed that a woman’s reproductive function enslaved them. Once the Pill came around, it gave women the chance to break free.
1. For the first time, women could separate sex from reproduction because of the Pill's revolutionary breakthrough.²⁶
 2. Women could now have sex without fear of getting pregnant and for reasons other than procreating, pleasure.²⁷

²³ Mary A. Kassian *The Feminist Mistake : The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*. Vol. Revised edition, Crossway, 2005.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Ellen Willis, “Toward a Feminist Sexual Revolution,” *Social Text*, no. 6 (1982): 3-21, accessed July 21, 2021, DOI: 10.2307/466614.

²⁶ B. Bailey, “Prescribing the Pill: Politics, Culture, and the Sexual Revolution in America,” *Journal of Social History* 30, no. 4 (1997): 827-856, accessed July 18, 2021, DOI: 10.1353/jsh/30.4.827.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

3. The idea that a woman needed to be a virgin to get married was no longer believed. The life of the single woman was celebrated, and sexual exploration encouraged.

b. Purity Culture 2.0

- i. The purity culture movement began in the 1990s as Christians who were children or teens during the beginning of the 1960s-era sexual revolution began to have children and teenagers of their own.
 1. AIDS had become the top cause of death for men in the U.S., and teen pregnancy was at an all-time high.
 2. The number of premarital sex partners had also increased substantially since the 1970s. For example, in the 1970s, only 2 percent of American women had more than ten sexual partners before marriage; in the 1990s, that percentage had increased to 10 percent (in 2010, it was 18 percent).
- ii. In an article for The Gospel Coalition, Joe Carter states “Purity culture” is the term often used for the evangelical movement that attempts to promote a biblical view of purity (1 Thess. 4:3-8) by discouraging dating and promoting virginity before marriage, often through the use of tools such as purity pledges, symbols such as purity rings, and events such as purity balls.”²⁸
 1. A purity pledge is when a teenager or young adult vows to abstain from sex before marriage. The original pledge in *True Love Waits*

²⁸ Joe Carter, “The FAQs: What You Should Know About Purity Culture,” accessed August 8, 2021. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/faqs-know-purity-culture/>

states, "Believing that true love waits, I commit to God, myself, those I date, and my future mate to be sexually pure until the day I enter marriage."²⁹

- a. Purity rings were worn as symbols by those who pledged.
2. Purity balls are formal dance events attended by fathers and daughters that promote virginity until marriage for teenage girls.
3. Many of the same principles found in the first century were continued here. Virginity was pushed as the height of purity, and women weren't included in the conversation concerning lust and sexual sins.

IV. WHERE WE ARE NOW

a. Defining the Problem:

- i. There has been a strange silence on the topic of sex within the Church. This has led to a lack of sexual openness and acknowledgment of the Christian women's struggle with sexual sins. The Church has not adequately taught about a woman's sexuality in context with purity as a heart issue concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ must be the focus with the Holy Spirit as the power.
- ii. Our culture idolizes sex and sexuality and has normalized fulfilling any sexual desires, whether married or not. Young girls and women in the Church are saturated with these ideas and easily fall into believing the

²⁹ Ibid.

devil's lies and indulge in the flesh. Both women and men must battle the world, the flesh, and the devil; sexual sin is not gender-specific.

1. The Church targets men when addressing sexual sins. This practice is a significant stumbling block for women enslaved to pornography, lust, masturbation, sexual fantasy, and same-sex attraction. It confuses their sexuality, spirituality, and humanity, leaving them ashamed to confess and ask for help.³⁰

iii. The Effects of Purity Culture

1. In *The Scarlett Virgins: When Sex Replaces Salvation*, Rebecca Lemke points out that "Our choice to detach topic of sexual purity from the regular conversation has isolated it from the whole of Scripture and life, turning questions that are meant to press us further into prayer, the church, and God's Word, into books, conferences, and websites."³¹
 - a. It was a legalistic movement that created a list of rules to follow in order to achieve purity. It taught the wrong motivation for purity and created Christians who modified their behavior without getting to the heart of the problem.
 - b. John Piper distinguishes two types of shames, misplaced and well-placed. He defines misplaced shame as "shame for

³⁰ Jessica Harris, "Sexual Sanity for Women (Book Review)," accessed June 24, 2021, <https://www.covenanteyes.com/2013/07/16/sexual-sanity-for-women-book-review/>.

³¹ Rebecca Lemke, *The Scarlet Virgins: When Sex Replaces Salvation*. (2017).

something good — something that doesn't dishonor God."³²

Well-placed shame is when "we have a hand in bringing dishonor upon God by our attitudes or actions."³³

- c. Purity culture did not address the misplaced shame that women experienced over their sexual desires by only focusing their teaching in that area on men.
 - d. There is a well-placed shame as well. When one gratifies their sexual desires outside of marriage, they are dishonoring God and should feel shame.
2. In *Talking Back to Purity Culture*, Rachel Welcher states this, "While well-intended in some respects, the purity movement would, not unlike its sexual revolution counterpart, overswing the pendulum..."³⁴
3. Its emphasis on purity and virginity without pursuing the motivation behind it, which is God's glory and becoming like Christ, lacked the power to sustain it. However, women were rarely talked to about lust and the temptation they would face with their sexual desires.
- a. Being a virgin does not mean that one is pure. Virgins can indulge in sexual sin. It is about being pure in heart and action. You cannot pursue purity in action alone.

³² John Piper, "Battling the Unbelief of Misplaced Shame | Desiring God," accessed July 8, 2021, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/battling-the-unbelief-of-misplaced-shame>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Rachel Joy Welcher, *Talking Back to Purity Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020).

- b. Sexual purity cannot be motivated by the approval of those around us. Our identity in Christ should be the motivation for pursuing purity as we are His pure bride.³⁵
 - c. We should seek to develop a purity culture within the Church that clings closely to Scripture and help people learn how to ward off sexual sins biblically.
- iv. There is a lack of teaching on sex from a biblical perspective in the Church and the Christian home. Girls are learning about sex and sexuality from friends, movies, tv shows, and music. Often, they hear from the Church and parents not to have sex without biblical explanation. The lack of explanation and further teaching leaves girls with a shaky foundation that quickly falls apart when under pressure.
- 1. In Paul Tripp's book *Teens & Sex*, he states that because of the silence on the topic, "Sex tends to get placed outside the boundaries of the normative Christian worldview."³⁶
 - 2. Church leaders and parents must teach a complete biblical view of sex and sexuality. Ellen Dykas wrote an article for Harvest USA, "God gifted women with their sexuality for his glory. Even though the fall has marred its beauty, Jesus came to forgive and transform sexual sinners, women as well as men!"³⁷

³⁵ Rachel Joy Welcher, *Talking Back to Purity Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020).

³⁶ Paul David Tripp, *Teens & Sex: How Should We Teach Them?* (P&R Publishing Company, 2000).

³⁷ Ellen Dykas, *Women and Sexuality: The Church's Blind Spot* ed. Nicholas Black (Dresher, PA: Harvest USA, 2018), accessed June 17, 2021, https://www.harvestusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Harvest-USA_Spring-2018-Magazine.pdf.

3. The bible speaks clearly about sex being a gift within the parameters of marriage. However, the Christian community gets caught up in addressing the gross excesses in the world, sending mixed messages about sex.
 4. Paul Tripp states, “As Christians, we say that sex is a wonderful gift from God, yet we are strangely silent on the topic and uncomfortable in the rare instances when it is discussed. This leads to a lack of sexual balance, a lack of sexual openness, and a lack of clear, practical sexual education.”³⁸
 5. The bible speaks clearly about the dangers of sexual immorality.
- v. There is a lack of understanding on responding to women who confess their struggles with sexual sin.
1. Sexual sins are not beyond the Lord and what he can do. There is forgiveness and freedom for those enslaved as well as grace and mercy.
- b. Evidence of the Problem
- i. Women are silent about their sexual sins for fear that they will be met with a lack of grace.
 - ii. Women do not have biblical convictions about sexual things.
 1. Multiple young women have stated they thought only vaginal intercourse was sinful.

³⁸ Paul David Tripp, *Teens & Sex: How Should We Teach Them?* (P&R Publishing Company, 2000).

- iii. Women enslaved to sexual sins carry misplaced shame, not understanding that God created them to have sexual desires and the biblical way to fight against them.
 - iv. Women believe that being a virgin alone makes them pure.³⁹
 - 1. In *Talking Back to Purity Culture*, Rachel Joy Welcher states that "when we believe virginity is equal to purity we neglect Jesus' call for the pursuit of whole-person purity...."⁴⁰
 - a. Virginity is a part of the whole person and should be pursued as we are called to be pure in body and soul. As Jesus pointed out, God sees our heart of lust and declares it equal to the act itself.⁴¹
- c. Effects of the Problem
- i. Girls and women are easily swayed to sin sexually. The lack of teaching and conversation about sexual sins leaves girls and women confused and without a solid foundation to stand on. This reality makes it easier for them to begin to believe what the world has to say about sex.
 - 1. While talking to a group of young women, one stated that she did not know about sexual things; she only knew that intercourse was sinful. So when a guy told her it was ok to do other sexual things, she believed him.

³⁹ Rachel Joy Welcher, *Talking Back to Purity Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

- ii. Women do not confess or seek help and therefore continue in the cycle of enslavement.
 - 1. A young woman who needed help with her porn addiction said she never heard about women dealing with sexual sins, so she did not feel she could get help.
- iii. Women are defeated and feel as if there is no hope to overcome their sexual sins.
 - 1. A young woman enslaved to many sexual sins stated that she did not see a way out. She did not believe she could overcome it.
- iv. They believe the lie that they are alone and struggle with a "man's sin."
 - 1. Years ago, in a conversation with a friend, she said she thought something was especially wrong with her because she struggled with a man's sin, porn.
- v. Without the freedom to speak openly about sex and sexuality in the Christian community, Paul Tripp states there are only one of three options left to choose.⁴²
 - 1. To try and live with the Church's embarrassing silence and cope with their questions, interests, and experiences alone.⁴³
 - 2. To assume that Christians do not struggle with sexual questions or problems. So, when they do struggle, they begin to question their relationship with the Lord.⁴⁴

⁴² Paul David Tripp, *Teens & Sex: How Should We Teach Them?* (P&R Publishing Company, 2000).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Paul David Tripp, *Teens & Sex: How Should We Teach Them?* (P&R Publishing Company, 2000).

3. To go where information and open discussion are available, the world.⁴⁵

V. HOW WE MOVE FORWARD

a. A Biblical View of Marriage, Sex, and Sexuality

- i. In order to talk about sex biblically, we must first begin with marriage.

1. Marriage is the doing of God (Mk. 10:6-9), the display of God (Eph. 5:31-32), and a model of Christ and the Church.

2. In *This Momentary Marriage* by John Piper, he states, “Marriage is designed to be a unique display of God’s covenant grace because, unlike all other human relationships, the husband and wife are bound by covenant into the closest possible relationship for a lifetime.”⁴⁶

- ii. Genesis 2:18-25 says, “The two shall become one flesh.” God created sex for marriage. Sexual pleasures in marriage are good.

1. John MacArthur states, “One flesh speaks of a complete unity of parts making a whole, e.g., one cluster, many grapes (Num. 13:23) or one God in three persons (Deut. 6:4); thus this marital union was complete and whole with two people. This also implies their sexual completeness.”⁴⁷

- a. Just as the heavens are telling the glory of God's power and beauty, so sexual climax is telling the glory of

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage*. (Crossway, 2009).

⁴⁷ John MacArthur, *ESV MacArthur Study Bible (Indexed)*. (Crossway, 2019).

immeasurable delights that we will have with Christ in the age to come. There will be no marriage there (Matt. 22:30).

However, what marriage meant will be there.

- b. In Paul's mind, the covenant union between a husband and wife is designed by God to reflect and display the spiritual union between Christ and the Church.

- 2. Sin does not come on to the scene until Genesis 3 tells us that sex came before the fall. Sex was created by God and was a part of his plan. It belongs to him and not the world.

iii. Sexual desires

- 1. In and of themselves, sexual desires are not sinful. Lauren Winner states, "Even though we are fallen, we remain part of God's original creation. We were created in particular ways, with particular longing and desires, and impulses. Those desires have become distorted in the fall, but they are still here within us, shaping our wants and our actions and our thoughts and our wishes."⁴⁸
- 2. In the Mosaic Law, Paul articulates boundaries and regulations that protect God's original intent that sex is expressed in marriage.
 - a. Paul clarifies that we are to avoid *porneia*., which includes fornication, lust, and sexual immorality (Eph. 5:3, 1 Thess. 4:6).

⁴⁸ Lauren F. Winner, *Real Sex*. (Brazos Press, 2006).

- b. Paul is not a killjoy; instead, he is helping the children of God live in God's ideal for creation.

iv. A Biblical Model of Sexuality

1. We are all worshipers, and sex is a significant way a person expresses their worship (Rom. 1:18-27). At the core, sexual sins are idolatrous. A person is driven by their sinful desires rather than to live for God's glory. You can only worship one master, self, or God.⁴⁹
2. A person must have their identity rooted in Christ to defend against sexual lust. Paul Tripp states, "He [The Apostle Paul] points out four aspects of the Christian's identity that provide wonderful boundaries for sex and every area of life."⁵⁰ Those aspects include servant of Christ, eternal being, one with Christ, and property of Christ (1 Cor. 6:12-20).
3. Sexual behavior reveals what rules one's heart, so when we reject God's revelation and authority, it inevitably leads to sexual sins.
4. God's standard of purity is impossible for us to meet and our inability to do so reveals our need for Grace (Rom. 7:7-25). We cannot believe the lies of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness. Instead, we must be dependent on Jesus Christ and deepening our love for him.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Paul David Tripp, *Teens & Sex: How Should We Teach Them?* (P&R Publishing Company, 2000).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

- a. Paul Tripp states, “I can no more fulfill God’s call to sexual purity in my strength than I can save myself.”⁵²
5. There is a difference between our sexuality and sexual sins. Being a sexual person is not sinful, but it is good because all that God created is good.
- b. The Engine for Purity
 - i. Welcher states, “The Christian pursuit of sexual purity is biblical, but it must flow out of recognition that it is Jesus who makes us pure.” Our pursuit of purity can never be divorced from the gospel.
 1. We must keep what Christ has already done in our view and not think we can add anything to it for our righteousness before God either by what we do or do not do.
 - ii. We do not pursue purity in order to gain anything. We pursue purity out of love for the Lord as a form of worship. We pursue purity because God has called us to be pure and free of sexual immorality.
- c. Continue the Conversation
 - i. Sex, sexuality, and sexual sins cannot continue to be taboo topics in Christian communities.
 1. Honest communication within the community is necessary to help us learn how to honor God with our sexuality. It gives us accountability and creates space to confess sins.

⁵² Paul David Tripp, *Teens & Sex: How Should We Teach Them?* (P&R Publishing Company, 2000).

2. Welcher states, “As we move away from hushed tones, downcast eyes, and nervous laughter, we can view sexuality more biblically – as something God-given, common to humankind, and good..”⁵³
- ii. Parents must not be fearful of talking to their children about these topics because when they stay silent, the only voice our children hear is the world.
- d. Need For and Efficacy of Biblical Counseling
- i. Counselors must be aware of women's problem with sexual sins so that they can grow in wisdom on the subject.
 1. A counselor cannot be disabled because of their lack of acknowledgment, leading to an inability to help and care appropriately for a counselee.
 2. It is pertinent to create a space for women to discuss their sexual sins. This freedom will take them out of isolation which works against their efforts to get help.
 - ii. The counselor must know that the Word of God has always demanded sexual purity for men and women.
 1. Heath Lambert states, “Since the commands are directed to men and women and since both men and women are sinful, then all of us will struggle to realize the demands for Biblical purity in our life.”⁵⁴

⁵³ Rachel Joy Welcher, *Talking Back to Purity Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020).

⁵⁴ Heath Lambert, “Women and Pornography” accessed August 13, 2021.

<https://biblicalcounseling.com/resource-library/podcast-episodes/til-042-women-and-pornography/>.

2. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that there is no temptation uncommon to man.
- iii. The counselor must stress the high standard we are called to, not even a hint of sexual immorality (Eph. 5:3).
 1. Heath Lambert states, “We are not allowed to be entertained by things that God believes will kill us.”⁵⁵
- iv. The counselor must warn and exhort the counselee so that they won't sin against a holy God.
 1. It is commanded in Hebrews 3:12-13 that we speak into the lives of brothers and sisters in Christ. It also commands that we open up about our struggles so that others can speak into our lives.
- v. Resources for the Counselor
 1. Booklets
 - a. Teens & Sex: How Should We Teach Them? By Paul David Tripp
 - b. What's Wrong With a Little Porn When You're Single? By Nicholas R. Black
 - c. Temptation: Fighting the Urge by Timoney S. Lane
 - d. *It's All About Me: The Problem with Masturbation* by Winston Smith
 - e. *Homosexuality: Speaking the Truth in Love* by Edward Welch

⁵⁵ Ibid.

2. Books

- a. *Sexual Sanity for Women: Healing from Sexual and Relational Brokenness* by Ellen Dykas
- b. *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace* by Heath Lambert
- c. *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ* by John Piper
- d. *Passions of the Heart* by John Street
- e. *Is God Anti-Gay: And Other Questions about Homosexuality, the Bible, and Same-Sex Attraction* by Sam Allberry
- f. *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* By Kevin DeYoung

VI. PLAN FOR COUNSELING

a. Hope and the Gospel

- i. All have sinned and fall short of God's glory, and we all deserve nothing but death. Nevertheless, because of God and his rich mercy, he sent his son to live the life we could not live and die the death we could not die and satisfy the wrath of God so we can be forgiven and made right with God (1 Pet. 3:18).

1. We must acknowledge our sinfulness and need of a Savior as well as confess and repent. These are the first steps towards freedom. Apart from Christ, there is no hope for biblical change.
2. He alone can change our hearts.

- ii. We have hope because we have all we need on life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3)

b. Addressing the Heart Issues

- i. Sexual immorality flows out of greed/covetousness, idolatry or self-worship (Col. 3:5).

1. You know it's an idol when you are willing to sin to get it, sin if you do not get it, and sin to keep it.
2. John MacArthur says this about greed, "The Greeks defined it as the insatiable desire that can never be satisfied to want what you do not have."⁵⁶
3. All sin comes from the decision to do what you have no right to.

c. God's Provision for Freedom

- i. There is hope because when we are in Christ, we are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness. Whatever sin one is dealing with, whether it is an addiction to porn or same-sex attraction, we know that there is freedom in Christ, freedom to reject sin (Rom. 6:14-22).

1. In *Help! She's Struggling with Pornography*, Rachel Coyle states, "we are no longer allies with our flesh but enemies against it" (Rom. 7-8, Eph. 6:12).

- ii. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:22-24 that we must put off the old way of living and put on the new self, which is created in righteousness.

⁵⁶ John MacArthur, "Killing the Sin in Your Life." accessed August 8, 2021. <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/81-51/killing-the-sin-in-your-life>

1. Putting off, renewing the mind, and putting on takes time. It is a process which is known as progressive sanctification.
2. The ANTHEM plan by John Piper is an excellent tool in fighting against sexual temptation.
 - a. Avoid, as much as is possible, and reasonable the sights and situations that arouse unfitting desire (2 Tim. 2:22).
 - b. Say No to every lustful thought within five seconds. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).
 - c. Turn the mind forcefully toward Christ as a superior satisfaction. Promises and pleasures of Jesus. Then we must turn to them immediately after saying, NO!
 - d. Hold the promise and the pleasure of Christ firmly in your mind until it pushes the other images out.
 - e. Enjoy superior satisfaction. Cultivate the capacities for pleasure in Christ.
 - f. Move into a useful activity away from idleness and other vulnerable behaviors. Lust grows fast in the garden of leisure.⁵⁷

VII. CONCLUSION

- a. Unfortunately, because the Church has not adequately taught about a woman's sexuality in context with purity as a heart issue concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, women have lacked what they have needed to fight sexual sins.

⁵⁷ John Piper, "ANTHEM: Strategies for Fighting Lust," accessed June 10, 2021. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/anthem-strategies-for-fighting-lust>

- i. God created women as a sexual beings with sexual desires, and Paul states in Romans 3:23 that “all have fallen short of the glory of God.” Once sinned entered the world, our desires were distorted. Based on these truths, it is no surprise that women sin sexually. This struggle cannot be ignored, but rather should address to in the home and the Church from a biblical perspective.
 1. The Church and the family must teach that Christ is the engine behind a women’s pursuit of purity and the Holy Spirit is the power by which it is accomplished.
 2. There is freedom in Christ from sins that enslave.
- ii. Young girls and women understand that there must be a change at the heart level and not just behavior.
- iii. The biblical engine for purity will give young girls and women a foundation to stand on, convictions to live by, and freedom to live in.

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