

*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while
you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.
~ 1 Peter 1:6*



Sexual Sin is Never Just a Private Matter

By Alan Medinger

Our sexual sins hurt the entire Body of Christ. Most of us recognize that when we engage in sexual sin with another person—even a very willing one—we have hurt that person by helping to facilitate their sin. But even our “solitary” sins, such as sexual fantasy or lusting in front of a computer screen, do damage beyond just the corruption that takes place in our own souls.

Western culture is individualistic to an excess.* And addicted people tend to be self-focused to an excess. (I recently heard a well know speaker and writer in our area of ministry refer to homosexuality as a branch of narcissism.) But we’re not just individuals, we are a part of a body—the Body of Christ, and our excessive self-focus is destructive to others. There is no victimless sexual sin. Every sexual sin hurts the Body of Christ, and thereby, the culture in which we live.

This is important for us to recognize in order to duly defend and strengthen the church, to further the Kingdom, and to give us another reason to turn away from sin when we’re tempted. To become healthy members of a strong and effective Body, we need to have an awareness of the harm that our sexual sins do to others.

I see seven ways in which even our solitary sexual sins bring harm to the Body of Christ:

1. Our sexual sins deny the power of God. Though we are not made instantly perfect by becoming Christians, through God’s power we are meant to grow in righteousness over time. Scripture teaches that “If we

confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Either the word of God is true or it’s not. Either He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness or He won’t. When we remain absolutely stuck in sexual sin for a long period, we give a poor testimony to the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. Remember, Paul wrote to Timothy to avoid those who are “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power” (see 2 Timothy 3:2-5).

2. Our sexual sins weaken our brothers and

sisters. This doesn’t just apply to people like me who teach, preach and write about sexual purity. When you fail sexually it weakens your brothers and sisters in their own struggles. Revelation 12:11 says, “*They* overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of *their* testimony” (italics added). Similar to number 1 above, we give testimony to *one another* of God’s power working in our lives, and our testimony really does help others in our

common battle against sin. When we’re sinning sexually, our experience can move others to not fight their battles so strongly either.

3. Our sexual sins make God’s commandments

appear abstract or unrealistic. The belief that “everybody does it” has been the strongest weapon used against sexual righteousness in the church and in the culture. Starting with Alfred Kinsey and his manipulated statistics, the “everybody does it” lie has been both the spark plug and the fuel for the sexual revolution. Every little sexual sin you and I commit makes its contribution

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to the cultural belief that everybody does it. And if everybody does it, the Bible and the church’s historic teaching are perceived as more and more unrealistic.

These first three reasons assume that you are being honest with others about your failings. But what if you’re not? Hiding your sexual sin does no less damage, whether they are discovered against your will or remain hidden.

4. Sexual sin contributes to an industry of sexual immorality. This is similar to number 3, above, but the contribution to the cultural belief that “everybody does it” is made more indirectly, though just as powerfully. Broadcasters are paying close attention to how many viewers are watching sexually provocative program. Web sites are tracking the numbers of visitors to its sexually titillating pages. And businesses most certainly are keeping inventory of how much they’re making on the sales of sexually explicit material. And advertisers are hungrily paying attention to it all. In light of this, each sexual sin is a vote cast for more sexual temptation. And as they say at election time, every vote counts. Whether or not our brothers and sisters are going to have to contend with sexual temptation tomorrow is determined by what we choose to do today.

5. Hypocrisy easily creeps in with hidden sins, and this damages the Church’s witness even more significantly. When we profess (or even imply) a standard of sexual purity and then don’t live up to it individually, we hurt the reputation of our fellow believers globally. What’s more, we hurt our capacity to successfully reach out to a hurting and broken world with the love of Jesus—the very mission Christ has given us to do. The hypocrisy of well known Christian leaders in this regard certainly testifies to this, and has done untold harm to the Body of Christ and its influence.

6. When hypocrisy is discovered, Christian believers become discouraged in their own walks and demoralized in the mission God has given them to do. I recently heard of a leader of an addictions group (not part of an Exodus ministry) who fell almost weekly for two years while leading the group. Think of the damage that the discovery of this did to the people in his group. It’s bad when we fall; when hypocrisy is involved, it’s worse.

7. Sexual sin impacts others, even if they don’t know what it is. Even when our sin is not discovered, the duplicity in our hearts must affect others. Have you not ever discerned the presence of something wrong in a Christian, and then found out that your discernment was of the Lord? I once had an Episcopal

bishop say to me regarding sexuality, “We know what the Bible says, but we also know that nobody can live that way.” I thought to myself, “You son of a gun, I’ll bet you’re cheating on your wife,” and later heard evidence that he was.

Duplicity in our hearts effects how we interact. We can’t spend hours (or years) thinking, viewing, or treating men and women as objects of our sexual desire without having it impact how we interact with everybody else—our friends, co-workers, or family. For instance, viewing Internet pornography for hours on end is like meditating, shaping our mind’s attitudes and feelings about men and women. And this in turn, influences how we treat others.

8. Our sins weaken the Body as members are disqualified from serving. Whether because of their own conscience or their church’s discipline, many are excluded from leadership roles in the church—Sunday school teachers or ministers of music for example—because of sexual sin in their lives. This is a good and right response to ongoing sexual sin, but it does weaken the Body because they—rightfully—cannot use their particular gifts to build up the Body. (A positive correlation to this is that sometimes people who take on leadership roles in our ministry are strengthened by the realization that if they fail to maintain their sexual purity, they will harm the people to whom they are called to minister.)

9. Our sins strengthen the enemy. Man’s proclivity towards sexual sin is one of Satan’s most powerful weapons in his battle against the church, the culture and individual souls. Look at how the corruption of our culture, with the damage it has done to marriage and its abuse and neglect of children, has come about because of sexual sin. From Old Testament times with its temple prostitution forward, Satan has mixed sex and spirituality in a frontal attack on God and His people. Today we see such a mixture in *The DaVinci Code*. Our little sins strengthen Satan in his battle to pervert God’s world.

10. Our sexual sin makes the Church less able to be salt and light. Parts of the Church have merely acquiesced and embraced Satan’s and the world’s view of sexuality. We see this in gay bishops and the blessing of same-sex unions. The rest of the Church, the parts to which most of us belong, is the primary force standing against the culture of hedonism. But our role as a light in the darkness is regularly diminished by our sexual sins. A cancer of corruption in any part of the Body renders the whole Body less effective.

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If you find yourself discouraged by how the truths in this article apply to you, please don't be. Your Father does not reveal truth to beat you down, but to help move you to a better place. Let these words of truth convict and encourage you to do what you need to regarding dealing effectively with your sexual sin struggles. Get help, get involved in a support group, see a Christian counselor, get some accountability from other believers, draw nearer to Christ in your area of need. As you do, you'll be in good company.

And the next time you feel tempted to yield to lust, try to remember that more than your own personal purity is at stake. "If one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Corinthians 12:26). Similarly, if one member sins, all the Body is wounded by the sin.

You are a soldier on the front line, and holding your Godly position will strengthen your comrades and will build up God's kingdom on earth here and now. I am a soldier too, and I'm trying to remember these things in my life for your good and for the good of our brothers and sisters everywhere. Our battle with lust is but a single battle in a larger war. Each of our individual, personal victories helps move the Kingdom forward.

*See *Regeneration News*, April, 2006; "Individualism: The Spirit of the Age"

Please Pray With Us . . .

Thanksgiving – We thank God for this year's annual Exodus Freedom Conference last month. 800 people gathered for a week of teaching, fellowship, and inspiration to walk free from sexual sin in fellowship with Christ. Testimony after testimony of God's great mercy and grace were shared, and lives were most definitely changed. What a wonderful God we follow!

Petitions – Please continue to pray for the ministry as we move into this new season of serving Christ. We are seeking additional funding, new staff, and continued guidance from the Lord as we move forward with this important work. We are seeing His hand at work and it is an exciting time. Your prayers are so pivotal to what we can accomplish. Thank you so much!

For more information or in-depth monthly prayer requests,
E-mail josh@RegenerationMinistries.org.

Ministry Updates

Baltimore Office Renovations

Over 20 volunteers have given their time and energy in the course of the past several weeks, stripping wallpaper, removing cabinets, hanging new doors, spackling, painting, and working on other renovations in our Baltimore office. A few of them also donated tools, supplies and materials for the renovation.

Thank you so much to the men and women who gave so selflessly to this greatly needed office update. Because of their commitment and sacrifice, the total out of pocket expense to the ministry for the renovations was a mere \$300.

If you want to get involved in these updates, both Regeneration branches are in need of new office furniture for the group meetings and lay-counseling taking place there weekly. You can call either office to learn about their specific needs, or the estimated cost of all the furniture is \$3500.

Book Ministry News

When we announced a few months ago that we would no longer be selling books and other resources through Regeneration Books, we simultaneously announced that a related ministry would pick up where we were leaving off. Though they remain open to the possibility in the future, that ministry has decided that now is not the time for them to take on this new venture.

So, we are working to revamp www.RegenBooks.com to meet this incredible need in a new way. We'll continue to provide specific information about the best books, audios, and videos addressing homosexuality and sexual addiction from a Christian perspective, while now also providing links to other sites where those resources can be purchased. In other words, we'll continue to let people know what trustworthy resources they can turn to for help, but instead of providing those resources here at Regeneration, we'll refer people to other ministries and businesses where they can find the items they need.

Ministry News

Living Waters, Fall 2006

To apply for the 2006 – 2007 Living Waters program, please contact us today! Space is limited for this life-changing program, and you will not be disappointed. Designed by Andy Comiskey, of Desert Stream Ministries, Living Waters goes to the heart of sexual sin issues like homosexuality, sexual addiction, and sexual abuse, and leads participants to true love Himself. With sound biblical teaching and an emphasis on inner healing prayer, the program provides an environment for the Lord to minister to the deep wounds of the sexually broken man or woman. Please contact us for more information or to apply.

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These programs fill up quickly, so don't delay!

Baltimore Parents Groups

“Is it my fault?” “What could I have done differently?” “What can I do now?” “Who can I talk to?” “Will this pain ever go away?” If your son or daughter is gay or struggling with homosexuality, you don't have to seek the answers to your questions alone! Help and support are here for you through two parents support groups in the Baltimore area.

Please contact Regeneration for more information at 410-661-0284 or RegenBalto@RegenerationMinistries.org.

Seeking Part Time Office Assistant

We are seeking a part-time office administrator for our Baltimore ministry. Qualified candidates must be organized, good with computers, and responsible. If you have a heart for this ministry and are administratively gifted, we're looking for you! Please contact Josh at 410-661-0284 or josh@RegenerationMinistries.org.

Financial News

Ministry this summer continues as new men and women contact us for help nearly every day. We are so blessed to be a part of God's provision for them as they seek freedom from sexual sin and brokenness, and we want to invite you to continue (or begin) to be a part of Christ's work in their lives.

Similar to last summer, we've experienced a significant drop in contributions since May, and at the writing of this newsletter (mid-July) we need about \$30,000 to catch up to budget. The harvest is plentiful, and we are praying for an increase in laborers--including those who labor with us through financial support. Please send your gift today! Thank you so much.

For information about Automatic Giving options, call our accounting manager at 410-661-0284, ext. 3 or E-mail RegenBalto@RegenerationMinistries.org.

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- New Directions
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- Wives' Group

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- Living Waters
- Women's Group
- Wives' Group
- Men's Group
- s.a.l.t. (Sexual Addiction Group)