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Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in it's various forms.

~ 1 Peter 4:10



NEWS
Regeneration
www.RegenerationMinistries.org

Love and Sex in Order

By Alan Medinger

Many of us, in our daily times in the Word, are probably ministered to most effectively through modern translations of the Bible. From time to time, however, the old words, such as those found in the King James version can seem to impart a broader and deeper meaning. In the familiar story of the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda, (John 5:1-17), Jesus asks the man, “Do you want to be healed?” In the King James version our Lord asks, “Would you be made whole?” I believe that being “made whole” offers a much more profound picture of what the Lord does when He brings us out of our sinful brokenness than does the almost medical expression of being healed.

After the Fall man and woman lost their wholeness. They became broken. In their fallen state, their bodies cried out for one thing while their emotions craved another. What remained of their spiritual nature battled to achieve something else, often just the opposite of what their bodies and emotions were demanding. In the broken person good things like physical pleasure, emotional satisfaction and longing for purity were all thrown into conflict with one another.

When we are converted, Jesus starts the process of making us whole. We become one in our hearts, our bodies, and our spirits. We desire that which is truly good for us, and what is good for us pleases God.

Nowhere is our fallen brokenness more obvious than in our sexuality. God's plan was that out of a man's love for a specific woman, and a woman's love for a specific man, would arise a desire for sexual union with that one particular person. And when that desire found fulfillment in the context of their having made an exclusive and permanent commitment to each other, the act of sexual

union would be like a sacrament—an outward and physical expression of a deeper inner reality. So significant was to be the act, that it could be God's means of creating a new life, a new child who would grow up in the loving presence of a mother and a father.

But the Fall did terrible damage to this plan. In men, sexual desire was broken off from the deeper and faithful love for a special woman, and his sexual desire became a free floating thing too often craving gratification in what ever way it could get it. Sex without relationship became possible for almost all men.

God has given us such a wonderful gift in sexual desire and the means to fulfill that desire. And yet so many see sexual desire primarily as a problem, even a curse.

In women, the link between love and sexual desire was not broken to such an extent—healthy women still want to experience sex in a loving relationship—but in many women, male sexuality became seen as an instrument of male dominance and abuse. To truly give herself to a man was to become vulnerable in a way fraught with risks. Of course such fears were often justified given the broken condition of so many men.

So, in most men, and in many women, a key element in our brokenness has been that sexual desire and love have come apart. It follows that if we are to be healed and be made whole, one essential element will be to bring sexual desire and love back together. Realizing our need to do this and pursuing it can be an important factor in regaining sexual wholeness.

Understandably, when faced with sexual problems—sexual sin to be specific—we address sex. If we are acting out, we try to gain control over our sexual desires. If we are drawn to people of the same sex, or to people

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other than our spouse, we seek to redirect those desires. We try all sorts of means, spiritual and otherwise, to control this unruly part of us.

Essentially what we are doing is trying to suppress certain sexual desires. As anyone who has struggled in this area knows, these desires don't readily yield to such suppression especially in the long run.

Rather than just go the way of suppression, I believe that one of the most effective strategies we have for becoming whole sexually—for becoming the men and women God created us to be—is to do what we can to reconnect love and sex. And consistent with God's original plan, I believe we should seek to have love take first priority. We must first seek to love and then, where appropriate, nourish sexual desire.

I am going to address this with men first, because that is where the break between love and sexual desire has created the greatest havoc. First, we will deal with married men, then with single men and finally with women.

MARRIED MEN

I have told this story before, but I believe it bears repeating in this context. A wealthy Christian man, an American who lived in another country, had experienced considerable success in

overcoming his same-sex attractions. He no longer acted out homosexually, and he was not significantly bothered by sexual desires for men. But he was married and he felt little sexual desire for his wife. He came to the United States to meet with me and several other "ex-gay" leaders to seek our help in solving this problem. After he went back to his adopted country, he informed me that we had helped him some but not very much. Then a few months later he called tremendously excited. His problem had been solved. He had gone to a secular sex therapist and in the first session she had told him one thing, "Speak tenderly to your wife." In speaking words of love to his wife, his sexual desire for her was stirred. Sexual desire had flowed out of love.

For years when I described my healing that took place 32 years ago, I would say that God had taken away my desire for man and gave me a desire for my wife. But then, as time gave me a better perspective, I started to say, "I fell in love with my wife, and my desire for men went away." This is what really happened. Love came first. In God's plan it always does.

These days Regeneration ministers to almost as many sexually addicted heterosexual men as men with same-sex attractions. Over time as we have compared married heterosexual and married SSA men, we have found little difference in the incidence of the men having a lack of sexual desire in their marriages. In both groups, desire has broken off from relationship. It has taken off and its gratification has become an end in and of itself.

The great commandment made of men regarding their wives is that we love them, even as we love our own bodies (Ephesians 5:25-32). Of course Scripture calls us to be faithful, to be sexually chaste and so forth, but in directly addressing the husband-wife relationship we are told to love our wives. I believe God stressed this because He knew that when we truly love our wives our sexual desires will become re-ordered.

I believe—and I know from experience—that we can do things to nurture in ourselves a deeper and stronger love for our wives. Speaking "tenderly", acts of kindness and generosity, consciously choosing to focus on their attributes and their particular beauty, faithful prayer for them—all these things can increase our love for them. In the process our sexual attention can be drawn to where it belongs.

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Please Pray With Us . . .

Thanksgiving – *Please thank God with us for . . .*

- Our solid financial situation as we enter the New Year.
- The approximately 1,000 individuals and churches who gave to the ministry in 2006.
- The Father's faithful work in the lives of the many men and women ministered to by Regeneration in 2006.

Prayer Requests – *This month, please pray for . . .*

- While we ended 2006 in the black, we have yet to raise the needed funds to hire an additional ministry staff member in Northern Virginia, a position we need to fill quickly. Please pray for the Lord's provision in all ways.
- God to grant His church a renewed vision of the good and glory of sex and sexuality—one that far exceeds the sinful sexual enticements the world suggests are best.
- That Regeneration would become a better and better tool in the Savior's hand as He seeks and saves those lost in sexual sin and brokenness.

For more information or in-depth monthly prayer requests,

E-mail josh@RegenerationMinistries.org.

Love and Sex In Order*continued from page 2***SINGLE MEN**

For obvious reasons, single men are usually going to have a tougher time with sexual struggles than married men. But single men can also be helped through seeking to reconnect sexual desire and love. They don't have a wife to love, but they can *seek* a woman to love. I am not calling them to focus on finding a woman they can marry and have sex with, but a woman to love. Let love come first.

With most SSA men this will start with focusing on the beauty and goodness of feminine qualities in all sorts of women. I am not speaking exclusively of physical beauty but of the deeper expressions of the feminine—women's softness, their receptiveness, their deeper understanding of the human heart. If you are a single SSA man, you can train yourself to see and appreciate these qualities. Eventually your appreciation for these qualities can come together in one woman, and you might find that she had captured your heart. Then trust God to let sexual desire flow out of this.

"I fell in love with my wife, and my desire for men went away." This is what really happened. Love came first. In God's plan it always does.

In Regeneration, so many of our single SSA men have the expectation that they are going to start experiencing sexual attractions to women outside of a relationship with a specific woman. As I have said here, such attractions are an effect of the Fall. God is not going to take away a man's homosexual brokenness in order to give him heterosexual brokenness. Almost always, our SSA men start to experience sexual desire for a woman after that one woman God has for them comes into their life.

IN WOMEN TOO

I said earlier most women retain the connection between sexual desire and relationship. In most women sex without relationship is not truly satisfying. But there is another way in which the sex-love connection has been damaged. Fear and distrust have become walls aimed at keeping out male sexuality. This is particularly true with an SSA woman. They might love a man, but there is still a barrier to his sexuality.

Although wives are to love their husbands (Titus 2:4), the emphasis in Paul's letter to the Ephesians is that wives be subject to (5:22) and respect (5:33) their husbands. This is

not possible for women who have contempt for men, or who see men primarily as abusers or otherwise a threat. In order to become whole, women need to develop a proper way of seeing men in general, so when God brings that right man along, her emotional attraction to that man will develop a sexual component. In women the process of change doesn't begin with sexuality. A woman's walls against male sexuality cannot come down until her broader walls against men come down.

So the woman who struggles with SSA can move toward wholeness as she seeks to discover and focus on the qualities in men that are good and godly. I am not speaking of qualities that will right away stir up romantic feelings;

such feelings may have to be resisted at first. Rather qualities that mark true manhood—things like strength of character, determination, and passion for truth. And she needs to see men as they really are: physical, playful, often single-minded. If possible, a woman can be helped by connecting with groups or families where such men are present.

As a woman learns to respect and appreciate manhood, she can come to choose to trust good men, and feel safer with men. will become safer. If and when the right man comes along, respect for manhood may have replaced the wall of protection from manhood. Then the woman may be able to love a man and picture herself submitting to him in the sexual embrace.

GOD'S PLAN IS PERFECT

God has given us such a wonderful gift in sexual desire and the means to fulfill that desire. And yet so many see sexual desire primarily as a problem, even a curse. Through God's power and our seeking, we can return our sexuality to that place where it is truly a blessing. Married or single, male or female, we become whole as more and more we become Christians in whom sexual desire flows out of love. ■

FINANCIAL NEWS

Special thanks to so many of you who contributed sacrificially in the final months of 2006! Because of your generosity, we move into 2007 without any debt or significant budgetary cutbacks. You are an integral part of this ministry, and God is using your gifts in the lives of those we serve. Thank you so much!

Moving forward, we continue to need additional funds to bring on additional staff, perhaps most especially someone to join **Bob Ragan** in our Northern Virginia branch. The cultural and spiritual implications of ministry in Northern Virginia cannot be understated. Consider this: Our capacity to minister right near and in Washington, D.C. literally has the potential to impact the future morality of our country. In the spiritual realm, we might say that there are “spiritual politics” that influence our culture. Regeneration NoVA is fighting for the hearts of men and women who need freedom, and they are doing so in a strategic location. We can play a much more significant role—if you will help us! Would you consider increasing your giving in 2007? Even a 10% increase would make such a difference! **Thank you for your participation in Christ’s work through Regeneration.**



MINISTRY NEWS

Pastors, Youth Leaders, Christian Counselors!

If you are a pastor, youth leader, Christian counselor or simply someone who wants to become more equipped to help those who struggle with homosexuality or sexual addiction, we can help! This spring, Regeneration’s Baltimore branch will be hosting a series of luncheons providing you with information and practical insights on how to minister to men and women caught in the grip of sexual sin. These problems are only becoming more pronounced around us—come learn how you can be an agent of change! Contact us at info@RegenerationMinistries.org or **410-661-0284**.

Exodus Regional Conference

It’s not too early to begin planning for the Exodus Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference April 20 to 22 at Ridgcrest in Asheville, North Carolina.

Our featured speaker this year is **Janelle Hallman**, an excellent communicator offering keen insights helpful to both men and women seeking freedom from homosexuality. In addition, she is perhaps one of the leading experts on healing from lesbianism. Janelle has been a key note speaker for Exodus International and Focus on the Family’s *Love Won Out* Conferences. For more information, go to www.hopeforwholeness.com.

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