

## Hope for the Sexually Broken

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Living Sanely in an Insane World

Exodus 15:1-7

As I begin this talk titled "Hope for the Sexually Broken," I want to speak to those of us who have made wrong choices in the area of sex, but also those of us who have been sexually sinned against.

I received the following emails in our congregation over the last two weeks. One man wrote this:

*As a child I never felt like one of the guys. I felt inferior to boys my age and didn't quite connect with the men in my family. I discovered pornography at the age of 7. By the age of 12, I was absolutely hooked.*

*At 13 I became a Christian, but was disappointed to find that my sexual struggles didn't disappear. In fact, my inner turmoil only increased. I was embracing God's truth as his follower, yet still experiencing strong ungodly desires that I could not wish or pray away.*

*In my early 20's I met a guy with whom I developed a co-dependent friendship. That friendship later developed a sexual component. My confusion and inner conflict peaked. What I was doing was meeting a deep need for intimacy, but in a terrible way. I didn't know what to do.*

Another man wrote this:

*My story starts out with sexual abuse as a child by someone known to my family. This may very well be the single reason that my life has been, at least to me, much darker than most people's lives. Later, in my teen years the tables turned and it was I that became the molester. I was the one doing similar things to my cousin and neighbor. The guilt associated with the memory of those encounters is what I believe became the central reason for my addictions including countless drugs of every kind.*

This man goes on to describe how he fell into homosexuality and later became a homosexual prostitute.

Finally, a woman wrote me this email just yesterday:

*Dear Rich,  
Since you began your series on sex, I have felt that I should write to you and tell you how pornography has impacted my marriage. Sadly, my*

*husband struggles with a pornography addiction and has dealt with it the entire 8 years we have been married. I am not sure if you even plan to address pornography in your series or not, but I do know it is one area that affects many people within our congregation. There are those who are addicted to its use, and there are others who are impacted by that addiction and it can be devastating for all involved.*

*To make matters worse, many people have false ideas about why a man or woman begins to look at pornography or what causes an addiction. For example, one leader in our church recently said that sometimes a man will look at pornography because his wife doesn't have sex with him often enough.*

Of course, our brokenness regarding what we do and what we have experienced at the hands of others is infinitely varied. The cracks in our own psyches have their own particular permutations. I don't think that we can even begin to wrap our hands around such a huge topic as hope for the sexually broken without considering, first of all, the power of our culture to shape and define us. See, I think that most of the Christian church's approach to sex and to sexual healing gets off on the wrong foot right from the very beginning. Churches often speak to people as if they were isolated individuals living wholly apart from the media, the arts, marketing, family systems, work places, schools, and other people. We offer individualist solutions for solitary people to implement on their own.

Most people fail to implement those solutions because that is not the way that sin or healing actually works. There is something that makes evangelical churches rarely speak about something called structural evil. By structural evil, I am talking about evil that exists outside of a person that has the power to coerce and shape an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions. For example, racism is a structural evil that exercises controlling influence on the way that people think, act, and feel.

Let me bring this down to earth. If you grew up in the South before the Civil War, in a society that maintained the structural evil of slavery, you could be a Christian born in the society who individually did not consciously decide to oppress the victims of slavery but you might not feel any guilt over participating in this great evil because this was just the way things were. You were raised to have certain attitudes. Structural evil is like the air we breathe. You may not even be aware that it is polluted.

In contemporary America one of the great structural evils that controls people's thinking and shapes people's attitudes and feelings is a perversion of the gift of sex. If you type in the word "porn" or "pornography" on Google, how many hits do you think you would come up with? A million? Two million? Try over 150 million. The Internet Filter Review places the number of pornographic websites

as encompassing over 400 million web pages constituting 12% of the total number of websites on the Internet.

Do you know that pornography is not just a male problem anymore? The *New York Times* recently wrote an article about women tailoring the sex industry for other women. Tragically, this is going under the label of “female empowerment.” ComScore Media Metrix, an Internet research firm, has found that 42% of all visitors to adult websites in the course of a month were women, with the highest rates among women ages 18-34. This is an issue no one in the church talks about – women addicted to pornography. One co-owner of a sexually-oriented business said, “We’re getting a boost from the way Internet allows privacy and a shift from expectations about sex especially from women. This is a whole new market for us to exploit.”

The teen pop music industry feeds into this structural evil. In a book titled *The Porn Generation* written by Ben Shapiro. He is a 21-year old first-year law student at Harvard Law School and an orthodox Jew. Here is what Ben Shapiro, who calls his generation “the porn generation” says: “My generation is totally saturated with pornography.” And about the teen pop industry, this is what Ben Shapiro writes, “The teen pop industry is geared and focused on sexualizing girls at the earliest possible age. Forget singing, song writing, or even basic musical talent – sex is now the driving force in pop music. Hot young stars often begin as virgins to solidify their teen girl base, then move on to semi-sexuality, emerge into flagrant sexuality or even promiscuity – and then for that extra edgy hip-ness add a tang of bi-sexuality.”

The rap culture, which is estimated to be between 70-80% Caucasian now was written about in *Essence Magazine*, the most popular Black women’s magazine in the country. Here is what the editors wrote: “We are mothers, sisters, daughters, and lovers of hip hop. And today we stand at the forefront of popular culture: independent, talented, and comfortable with the skin we’re in. We are really feeling ourselves. Perhaps that is why we are so alarmed at the imbalance of the depiction of our sexuality and character in music. In videos we are bikini-clad sisters gyrating around fully clothed grinning brothers like Vegas strippers on meth. When we search for ourselves in music lyrics, mix tapes and DVDs, and on the pages of hip hop magazines, we only seem to find our bare breasts and bare [bottoms]...The damage of this embarrassed portrayal of Black women is impossible to measure. An entire generation of Black girls are being raised on these narrow images. And as the message and images are broadcast globally, they have become the lens through which the world now sees us. This cannot continue.”

But it is not just the pornography industry and music industry, but even the clothing industry. How many of you moms and dads, as you are getting ready to send your kids back to school, have struggled to find what you believe is

appropriate clothing that will not mark your child out as a total nerd, but doesn't sexualize your child either?

Abercrombie and Fitch, run right here out of Columbus, Ohio, has decided to use broken sexuality as one of their major marketing approaches. In 2001 in their spring quarterly, this clothing store published an article suggesting that a Catholic high school senior persuade a nun to break her vows. The issue also included an interview with a male porn star, who gave career advice. The 2003 Christmas catalog was pulled from shelves because it provoked such an outcry. They had the usual nudity that has become the calling card of Abercrombie, along with advice from a "sex-pert" who urged kids to get as much sexual experience as possible including "sex for three." Abercrombie also markets gay sexuality on a continual basis.

Let me just pause here and ask you: If you are a responsible parent, or you are a follower of Christ, what would ever incline you to spend your hard-earned money with an outfit like Abercrombie or any firm that explicitly uses broken sexuality to market its products?

I know some of you would say: Ah, Rich, does that mean you don't go to a bookstore like Barnes and Noble because they sell certain sex manuals?

If B&N began to use broken sexuality to market their bookstore, and really pushed that pedal, wrapped themselves in perversion to get an edgy feel, I would not go to B&N. I'm not going to give a company my hard-earned money when they spit in the face of my value system. I will leave it up to your consciences regarding how far a company can go before you say: I am going to stop shopping or working there.

Structural evil. Movie critics suggest that the way for an actress to be taken seriously as an actress is to do a nude scene. That is what Hailey Berry decided to do. So did Liv Tyler, Nicole Kidman, and Kate Winslet. And for a man, the way a male actor is taken seriously as an actor is to portray a gay man. This is the career path for many Hollywood actors including Kevin Kline, Leonardo diCapprio, Russell Crow, Tom Hanks, Dennis Quaid, and Robin Williams.

Structural evil. And into this structural evil, Christians have people signing cards saying: "Just say no" or wearing purity rings. Now, this may be part of a solution, but it is not enough. You see, in the midst of this sexually broken culture, in which we live, we participate in the culture and sin sexually. Many folks in America buy the lie that as long as the sex is consensual and you love the other person, or at least like the other person, or at least are not practicing any deceit in the moment, then it is fine. And we are often sinned against.

I believe that Jesus offers hope for our sex-drenched culture. For those who have sinned sexually, Jesus can forgive and change you. For those of you who

have been sinned against sexually, Jesus can heal and change you. Jesus redeems sinners and Jesus restores sufferers. The cross speaks to both sinner and sufferer. We read in Isaiah 53:5 these words:

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Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.

But he not only forgives sinners, but the cross is also for those who have been sexually sinned against. Because we also read in Isaiah 53:4 these words:

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Isa 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities  
and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God,  
smitten by him, and afflicted.

As I continue this series about living sanely in an insane world, I want to speak to both sexual sinners and sexual sufferers in a talk I've titled "Hope for the Sexually Broken." Let's pray.

The Lord gives us a comprehensive approach to sexual brokenness in his Word. And I believe God's Word gives us a comprehensive approach to every form of brokenness. But God's approach goes way beyond the common evangelical approach, what one Christian writer, Dallas Willard, calls, "sin management." Sin management is basically opting for a position that says: Listen, the culture is a mess and so are you. But here are some rules to get you to live a reasonably moral life. We can't expect you to be really whole or well. We can't expect you to be sexually healthy. So here is a way to get you out of ICU and get you to live with a continual low-grade fever for the rest of your life.

How many of you have adopted that perspective? I can't expect to be really whole or well. I guess everyone lives with a low-grade fever.

Sin management communicates that you are like a voracious tiger. So you need to be locked up in a cage. Now, your tiger-like nature can't really change. You can't become a golden retriever or a gentle little lamb. You can't expect to really heal your lust, or really heal the pain of your victimization. But what we can do is allow the handlers of religion to chain you up so that you aren't dangerous to yourself or others.

Again, I wonder how many of you have bought into sin management rather than real Christianity? You can tell if you've bought into sin management by

discovering what you do when you are allowed to run free, when you are alone and no one is looking, what are you like?

- When you are out of town on a business trip in a city where no one knows you, when you are in a hotel all alone, what are you like?
- When you are at home alone with your boyfriend or girlfriend,
- When you are alone with your computer, what do you look at?
- When your mind runs free, what do you daydream about?
- When you pray, what do you believe God for in your home?
- What do you read when you get your hair done when there are no Christians around?

Sin management says that when you are let out of a cage, when you are alone, and no one is watching, you will revert to the same old behaviors that you always have reverted to – the same thoughts and attitudes.

The good news of Christianity says that you can be transformed. You can have a new nature. You can want something totally different than what you've always wanted before. Jesus teaches us that your wanters can change, even when you are alone.

Friend, be honest, has your wanter been changed in the area of your sexuality? Has your heart been healed in the area of your sexuality? See we can not lay a few rules over the top of a horribly broken culture and expect to be personally transformed. We need an entirely new approach to life.

Let me put it differently. The culture has bought into a storyline of lies about sex and as long as you buy the million lies that our culture teaches about sex, you will never get well. What are the lies?

#### SLIDE

- I have a right to sexual fulfillment.
- Sex ought to be thrilling and mind-blowing.
- What I do sexually is no one else's business, so long as people consent or love each other, or at least aren't deceptive, sex is fine.
- I am damaged goods. I might as well live that way.
- Sex for me will always be associated with pain, shame or horrible images.
- What I do sexually doesn't affect the real me.

To be healed, we have to step out of our culture's story like walking out of a really bad, stupid, offensive movie that is showing in some really smelly, run-down theatre with sticky floors. We have to continually get up and walk out of our culture's ridiculous stories about sex and immerse ourselves in a new movie, a movie that has brilliant themes and refreshing hopeful plots, and great actors, that is playing in a sparkling clean movie theatre with an amazing theatre seating. We need a new story about sex.

What is the storyline that you plug your life into? What is the storyline that we plug our sexuality into? I suggest that we can't do any better than the biblical story of the Exodus, the story of Israel's liberation from slavery in Egypt and their journey to the promised land. You see, we begin with slavery.

SLIDE – Exodus 1:8-14

Ex 1:8 Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.

Ex 1:9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us.

Ex 1:10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

Ex 1:11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

Ex 1:12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites

Ex 1:13 and worked them ruthlessly.

Ex 1:14 They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.

We currently live in a culture that does not know Jesus and enslaves its citizens. We live in a culture of structural evil in lots of areas. We see it in New Orleans. There were a lot of poor folks who had no means of escaping a hurricane, no connections. People were forced to live in the very lowest places of town. People can live in economic slavery; they can live in racial slavery, but I'm talking about sexual slavery. Sometimes sexual slavery can be the result of victimization, being preyed upon, being sexually betrayed. Slavery can be experienced in the form of fear, or haunting memories, or self-loathing, or radical promiscuity. Victimized men and women have an inability to form lasting friendships.

Sexual slavery may include viewing sex as intrinsically dirty, dangerous, shameful, or the exact reverse. Sexual slavery may mean that the only way that you ever find any sense of connection with a person of the opposite sex, or perhaps a person of the same sex, is through sexual expression. Even within marriages, those who are enslaved can view sex as an extremely unpleasant duty, or one can compulsively engage in sex.

Bottom line, for sexual sufferers, sex is not viewed as a holy and good gift. Sex is not an arena in which one experiences or offers committed love within marriage. There are hundreds of folks in this church who find sex to be an area of continual pain, shame, and brokenness and we are offering the following seminar for you:

- Pursuing God's Embrace –Seminar September 23-24.

Our culture enslaves through what are now called addictions. Psychiatrist Gerald May in his wonderful book titled *Addiction and Grace*, defines an addiction this way:

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An addiction is any compulsive, habitual behavior that limits the freedom of human desire.

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Addiction occurs when a person's desire is nailed to a specific object.

Now, the behavior is not limited, according to May, to external activity. Sometimes thinking is a behavior. Images, memories, ideas, concepts, fantasies, even certain states of feeling can become objects of attachments. So if you have an obsessive thought process, an unrealistic worry that continues in your life, or you may be addicted to certain moods, according to May – depression or cynicism, or shyness.

But what are the indicators that you are addicted, you are enslaved? How can you tell if you are an addict?

Well, the first element of addiction is tolerance.

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Tolerance is the phenomenon of always wanting or needing more of the addictive behavior, or the object of attachment, in order to feel satisfied.

What one has or does is never quite enough. You certainly see this in the area of money. We have attachments to money. At certain points in our lives, we feel the need for more money and so we make more money. We adjust our standard of living upward and what we have is never enough.

CS Lewis in his wonderful children's book called *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* describes addiction through the impact of eating Turkish Delight upon a child name Edmund. It is bewitched food. The more you eat, the more you crave. Some psychologists call this The Law of Diminishing Returns. To receive the same level of gratification that your formerly experienced, we have to increase the physical stimulation. That is the principle. That is why people move from one narcotic to a stronger narcotic.

The same law of diminishing return applies to sex as well. When you are young and you first hold the hand of a boy or a girl, it produces a thrill. Then holding hands is no longer satisfying so you move on to kissing, and then to intimate caressing, and so on up the scale. We see the same thing with pornography. We see the same thing with other types of sexually acting out.



Let me ask you a question: Do you see the law of diminishing returns at work in your sex life?

Here is the second indicator of an addiction. It is called withdrawal.

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Withdrawal: When the body is deprived of something it has become accustomed to, it responds with danger signals, as if something is wrong. A stress reaction may range from mild uneasiness and irritability, to extreme agitation with rapid pulse, tremors, and overwhelming panic.

Have you reacted this way to the withdrawal of an object or person you are attached to?

The third indicator of an addiction is self-deception. According to Gerald May, here is how we define self-deception.

#### SLIDE

Self-deception is the exquisite inventiveness that the mind can demonstrate in order to perpetuate addictive behaviors.

See, we are incredibly creative and to protect an addiction, we can deny that we have it. We can rationalize it away. We can blame other people, as husbands sometimes do with their wives: "Well, I wouldn't be having these affairs if you were more sexually giving."

The final indication of an addiction is the loss of will power. We believe that we can control the behavior. At certain points, people make vows to stop and resolutions to stop. Here is a simple test regarding whether you have lost your will power. If you say that you can handle this particular object, that you can stop it, you can do without it – if you say you can handle alcohol, you can stop at any time, or you are not addicted to pornography, or you are not addicted to shopping, or gambling, then here is a simple assignment: Just go ahead and stop. Do without it. Do without it today and do without it tomorrow, and do without it all week. Do without it this month – just stop. If you are successful, there is no addiction. If you can't stop, then no amount of rationalization and mind games will change the fact that you are an addict. You are enslaved.

All addictions impede freedom. All addictions diminish our humanity. All addictions are a form of slavery. And whether we are talking about the nailing of your will to the need for other people's approval, or food, or alcohol, or TV, or gambling, or money, or work, or drugs, if you see an indication of an addiction in your life, a family member's, or friend's life – tolerance, severe withdrawal symptoms, self-deception, a lack of will power, you, your family member, or your friend may want to attend a seminar that we are offering September 15, 16 & 17

titled, "Getting Free, Staying Free – Another Look at Addictions," taught by Don Williams.

We also have ministries here for you or a spouse, or to recommend a friend to, that deal with sexual slavery. One is called Integrity.Men for men who find themselves addicted. Another is Integrity.Women. We also have Integrity.Young Men and Integrity.Young Women. There is information in the lobby about these groups. You do not have to be a slave forever to any addiction. We do not believe in sin management. We believe in transformation.

So how does the enslaved person find freedom? Not through sin management. Not through self-help techniques. Not through will power and resolution, vows and trying to think differently. The slaves in Egypt were set free by God's intervention. Here is what we read in Exodus 3:7-10,

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Ex 3:7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

Ex 3:8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

Ex 3:9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.

Ex 3:10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

After the Israelites make it safely across the Red Sea, Moses sings this song in Exodus 15:1-7,

#### SLIDE

Ex 15:1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:

"I will sing to the LORD,  
for he is highly exalted.

The horse and its rider  
he has hurled into the sea.

Ex 15:2 The LORD is my strength and my song;  
he has become my salvation.

He is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Ex 15:3 The LORD is a warrior;  
the LORD is his name.

Ex 15:4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army  
he has hurled into the sea.

The best of Pharaoh's officers  
are drowned in the Red Sea.  
Ex 15:5 The deep waters have covered them;  
they sank to the depths like a stone.

Ex 15:6 "Your right hand, O LORD,  
was majestic in power.  
Your right hand, O LORD,  
shattered the enemy.

Ex 15:7 In the greatness of your majesty  
you threw down those who opposed you.  
You unleashed your burning anger;  
it consumed them like stubble.

This is called salvation. What is salvation? Salvation is God's healing of you. His restoring, redeeming work totally from the outside of you. Salvation is the action of God. It is not a self-help technique. Salvation is God's intervention in your life as a sheer gift, not because you jump through religious hoops, not because you manage your sin so well, not because of your will power, not because you read a certain book. Salvation means things are made right and you are forgiven and accepted, healed and saved, because of what another person does – namely Jesus Christ. This is the good news of Christianity. We no longer have to rely on ourselves; we can entirely rely on the life, work, death, and resurrection of the only person who was never addicted to anything or anyone.

Salvation means that the Spirit of the only truly free person who ever walked this earth since the sin of our first parents, the Spirit of Jesus enters your life and begins to free and transform you. 2 Cor. 3:17 reads this way:

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2Co 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

FF Bruce, the great New Testament scholar, offers this really helpful translation of 2 Cor. 3:17,

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"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there the heart is set free."

Jesus said in John 8:36,

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Jn 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

The apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1,

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Gal 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

How many of you long to taste freedom? Salvation means freedom. Salvation means the spirit of free Jesus enters your life and progressively makes you free. Salvation doesn't mean that we are instantly made perfect. Some people misunderstand 2 Cor. 5:17, which reads:

## SLIDE

2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

They make it mean that once you accept Jesus you are instantly healed of every remnant of sexual abuse you may have suffered, or you find immediate and permanent relief from all addictive enslavements. Some people think that once you accept Christ and the Spirit of his freedom come to live within you, you no longer have to confront addictive behavior in your own life.

When 2 Corinthians 5:17 talks about you being a new creation, it simply means this: You are truly new, you have God's very own Spirit in your life. 2 Cor. 5:17 does not mean that you are *entirely* new. The Israelites who crossed the Red Sea and escaped from Egypt were still not in the promised land. In fact, it took them 40 years of wilderness wandering following salvation to get into the promised land.

Could they have gotten into the promised land quicker? Probably; had they been obedient to the Lord and followed his leadership. We who are saved are not immediately transported to the promised land of sexual freedom. Can you enter the promised land of sexual healing and freedom, or freedom from some other addiction in your life in less than 40 years of wilderness wandering? Probably; if we are obedient to the Lord. But everyone has to go through a journey for some period of time in the wilderness. Again, just because you've gone through the Red Sea, and you are out on the other side, it doesn't mean that you are in the promised land.

God's reordering of our lives, God's transforming work so that you and I reflect God's purposes, and his glory in our lives, takes time. Even when you are taken out of Egypt, it does not mean, friend, that Egypt is taken out of you. We see this in the life of the Israelites. There is so much of Egypt still in them, so much longing to return to former patterns of slavery, so much idolatry.

How are we saved from abuse and addiction? How do the lingering effects of Egypt get out of our lives? Again, looking at the pattern of the Exodus, I see that God uses other people to help us get free. So many of us want God to zap us

from heaven as we kneel alone in our bedrooms or studies. How many of us have cried out to God and said: “God, please end this. Please change me. Take this desire away. Heal me.”

But God uses other people to pray for us, to support us, to hold us accountable, to speak truth to us, to extend grace and forgiveness to us. God uses other people to help us. In Exodus 17:8-13 we read:

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Ex 17:8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

Ex 17:9 Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

Ex 17:10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill.

Ex 17:11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.

Ex 17:12 When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset.

Ex 17:13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

Joshua could not have won the battle without Moses’ prayers and support and Moses needed support as well.

I want you to watch this video, brothers and sisters. The couple we are going to see in the video are in our church and they are showing remarkable courage in being willing to share their story in order to encourage many of us. What you are going to see is how God generally works in transforming a person’s life. And the way God generally works, is that he uses other people to help us.

#### VIDEO – Terry and Diana

You know, there is a wonderful picture of the way God uses other people to set us free in John 11. In John 11 Lazarus, Jesus’ friend, is dead. Nothing that human beings could do would ever make him alive again. Jesus has to intervene. He has to say from the outside: This is not a self-help program; it is not a sin management program. Jesus has to stretch out his hand and resurrect Lazarus from the dead. So in John 11:43, we see that dramatic scene of Jesus standing in front of the tomb of Lazarus. He cries out: “Lazarus, come forth!”

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Jn 11:43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”

This has been mentioned by many interpreters. He had to say: “*Lazarus*, come out,” because if he had simply said, “Come out,” all the dead who had ever died

would have been resurrected. So he says: "Lazarus, come out." And when Lazarus comes out, we read this in John 11:44,

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Jn 11:44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

That is the ministry of the local church – to untie each other. We are born again as we walk out of the tomb. We come back to life. It is ministries like Integrity.Men, Integrity.Women, Integrity.Young Men and Integrity.Young Women that take the grave clothes off of us.

Then God gives us a new standard of living in Exodus 20:1-3,

#### SLIDE

Ex 20:1 And God spoke all these words:

Ex 20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Ex 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

I want you to see something that is really important. The various commandments that God gives us are not a self-help method to produce transformation or freedom in our lives. Rather, the commandments of God are designed for a people who God has set free in order to maintain our freedom and expand upon it. The Ten Commandments are given specifically to people who have been saved, verse2,

#### SLIDE

Ex 20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

The foundation for putting into practice various boundaries in your life regarding how you are going to relate to the same or opposite sex, what you are going to do with your computer, what kinds of filters you are going to put there, what stores you shop in, what you watch on TV, the foundation is a genuine relationship with Christ. Once you are in that relationship with Christ, Christ speaks to you and says: "Now here is how you can build on the freedom that I've put in your life in salvation. Here is how you can expand on that freedom."

There are some book recommendations that I have for you. We have a table in the bookstore that goes along with this study on sexual sanity. Here is a few book titles that contain some very practical assistance, a standard for those who are already in relationship with Christ.

#### SLIDES

*Every Man's Battle*  
*Every Woman's Battle*  
*Every Young Man's Battle*  
*Every Young Woman's Battle*

These are very frank books written by men and women who are very transparent about their own struggles with sexual temptation and sexual sin and how they are overcoming those things, how they are incorporating God's standards in their lives.

We see in the Exodus this movement from slavery to salvation and how God uses community, and how he puts a standard in our lives. Finally, in this new story that we are to inject ourselves into, God spends 16 chapters teaching the children of Israel about worshipping him: building the tabernacle and making sacrifices.

You say: "Rich, what does that have to do with sexual healing? "

One of the things that Dallas Willard has so helpfully pointed out in a number of his books – *The Spirit of the Disciplines* and *The Divine Conspiracy*, is that the Christian life is pretty similar to playing professional sports in many ways. If you want to play sports at the professional level, it takes a tremendous amount of training and exercise to get yourself into peak condition. No matter how talented you are, you can be Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods, but the great athletes are people who are continually working out in the off-season. They are running sprints, they are doing squats, they are working with trainers, they are taking hundreds and hundreds of jump shots, or golf swings so that in the game situation they are able to naturally do what they otherwise would not be able to do.

Now here is how God transforms you through your use of spiritual disciplines, particularly the disciplines we find in Exodus 25-40, disciplines of prayer, private worship, public worship, and fasting. Why do we do those things? So that at game time, when we are faced with sexual temptation, when we are alone in a hotel room, when there is a possibility that we would violate a boundary, when someone is flirting with us, when we are going to cycle back into a really unpleasant memory, at game time we are able to obey God in the midst of the pressure.

Dallas Willard says that disciplines are things that we do in order to do what we cannot do. We can indirectly attack the issue of sexual healing by drying up the swamp from which our sexual brokenness is provoked. As you practice the discipline of prayer, as you practice the discipline of worship, as you practice the discipline of public worship and fasting, do you know what the indirect result is? You will find freedom in other areas of your life including the area of your sexuality.

I want to close with this. I have recently found tremendous benefit by morning and evening using *The Book of Common Prayer*, which is from the Anglican tradition, as part of my prayer life. In the morning I do their morning service and in the evening I do their evening service. The net result of which has been that different areas of my life that I have struggled with for many years are getting cleaned up. Not because I am directly aiming at those areas, but simply as the result of building my life in God.

Sexual sinners, Christ wants to forgive you and change you. Sexual sufferers, Christ wants to heal you and change you. Never believe the lie that this is the way I am and this is the way I'm always going to be. There is hope for you. There is hope for me. Just as God brought Israel from slavery into the promised land, so God can bring you and me from our sexual slavery into the promised land of sexual freedom. Let's pray.



## **Hope for the Sexually Broken**

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Rich Nathan

September 10-11, 2005

Living Sanely in an Insane World

Exodus 15:1-7

- I. The Story Of A Sexually Broken Culture
  
- II. The Story Of Healing And Hope
  - A. The Common Christian Story: Sin Management
  
  - B. The Story Of The Exodus
    - 1. Slavery (Ex. 1:8-14)
      - a. Tolerance
      - b. Withdrawal
      - c. Self-Deception
      - d. A Loss Of Willpower
    - 2. Salvation (Ex. 3:7-10; Ex. 15:1-7; 2 Cor. 3:17)
    - 3. The Role of Community (Ex. 17:8-13)
    - 4. A New Standard For Living Freely (Ex. 20:1-4)
    - 5. The Place Of Prayer And Worship (Ex. 25-40)