

Sexual Sin and Demonization

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This morning I am going to be exploring, as part of a series that I am doing on Spiritual Warfare, the link between sexual sin and demonization. I will be talking about this topic for the next couple of weeks, as I begin to explore the issue of inroads to our spirits. There are, biblically speaking, a number of ways that a person can be opened up to spiritual powers, dark powers, powers that grip our wills and bring us into tremendous bondage. And over the next several weeks, we are going to be looking at ways that individuals get opened up and enslaved to demonic powers.

Well this morning, and over the next week or so, I am going to be exploring the link between sexual sin and demonic bondage. Now, I have thought about this and taught about this for several years. I did a series some years ago on sexuality that contained some of my thoughts regarding the linkage. I have developed some of these things more recently as I have looked at my own life and as I have had an opportunity to be involved in more ministry to the demonized.

But some of the experiences that I have had just in the last couple of weeks have underlined for me this profound linkage between what we do sexually and the whole realm of demonic darkness. Some of you know that Rick Evans, an Assistant Pastor here, and I went to Scandinavia. We did a leadership conference there that was just great fun and we met with the St. Petersburg team. We set some things in order there which I am quite encouraged about. I think the team is on a much healthier footing and has good potential for the future.

While we were in Sweden ministering in various contexts (and also in Oslo, where I taught and ministered in the Oslo Vineyard on a couple of occasions) we saw a great deal of demonic activity. As we prayed for individuals, spirits would manifest. Invariably, not entirely, but very, very often the demonic activity was linked to some kind of sexual sin. On one occasion a gentleman brought forward a man whom he wanted me to pray for. And he said that he had discerned that this other man had a call on his life for pastoring. He wanted me to pray that the Lord would anoint this man for the ministry.

As I looked at the man, the Lord spoke to my heart and said that this man has an unclean spirit on him—there is sexual sin in his life. And the Lord told me what that sexual sin was. So here we were, standing around with three or four men and this poor guy who was brought forward for me to pray for for pastoral ministry. I could see on him, in my mind's eye, this unclean spirit.

So I wondered, "Now, what am I going to do? I don't want to embarrass him." I leaned forward and very quietly whispered in his ear, "Are you involved in this particular sin?" He looked up and said, "Yes, that is what I would like to get prayer for."

Well, I asked the group if I could just pray for him alone and I took him aside and we prayed and I asked the Lord to just break the bondage that was in his life. He said he felt a tremendous release. Actually, that is quite a common occurrence and is quite common even in this church.

Now, let me move from this particular experience to the larger sphere that we find ourselves in, in terms of the incredibly sexually charged environment that you and I live in and move in and swim in every single moment of our lives in the western world today. There is, at this time of our history in the western world, an almost infinite preoccupation with sex. I certainly saw that in Scandinavia and I see it happening in Russia. I see it when I travel to England. We certainly see it in the United States—this extraordinary preoccupation and discussion and analysis regarding only one particular area of human life and that is sex and sexuality.

No other human behavior is as talked about, written about, joked about, and obsessed about in the western world in the 90's as sex. On a micro-cosmic level, as we were traveling back from Scandinavia, there was a woman in the next row reading a popular woman's magazine that had a huge headline which read something like: "Is an affair right for you at this time?" A marital affair, is it right for you? Here is this woman, without blushing, without embarrassment, casually reading this article about exploring the possibility of an extra-marital affair. And it is just washing over her, drenching her thoughts.

Now, if we multiply this experience by millions and millions, as we consider the steady diet of images and messages pouring out from the TV talk shows, from Geraldo and Phil and the various other talk show hosts that seem to be multiplying now like rabbits, the soap operas, all of the women's magazines, even cooking magazines – have to have some article on sex; and, of course, all of the men's magazines; and we can't have a situation comedy any longer without having dozens of sexual jokes because we all know that the only thing that is funny or amusing or interesting is sex. There are no other topics to talk about, think about, sing about, rap about – no other topics, just sex.

Of course, we have to teach our children explicitly about sex and about sexual aberrations down to first grade. We have to teach them how to use a condom in the fifth grade. We find ourselves on a larger level drenched with sexually explicit messages and suggestions.

Some years ago, I read a statistic, which I have heard recently has held up fairly well. Did you know there are more adult bookstores in the United States than there are McDonald's franchises? I think about the number of McDonald's, they seem to be on every street corner. Apparently, there are more adult bookstores in the US than McDonald's franchises. It is an over 10 billion dollar business in the United States— pornography. It is a larger business than Coca-Cola.

And when you just consider the effects on our teens and kids, is there any innocence left in America today above 3rd grade? Many of our young women and men at a very early age have lost their virginity. You know, it is a rare occurrence for me as a pastor any more to marry people, both of whom are still virgins. Frankly, I am surprised when two people come into my office now and

they say, “We have decided to not sleep together.” Very often, the opposite is unfortunately true. More and more in premarital counseling, I meet men and women who have been deeply wounded as the result of their sexual activity and are approaching their marriage day with this wounding still in their lives.

Now, my purpose for setting all of this as a backdrop is to not simply explore American sexuality in the 90’s. Instead I want to speak about sexuality vis-à-vis one particular dimension and that is the connection between sexuality and spiritual warfare—the connection between sexuality and demonization.

Now, I want to remind you why I have been teaching on the topic of Spiritual Warfare. Sometimes as a series progresses, we get a little muddy about the reason for the series. I am teaching about spiritual warfare because we Christians need to wake up to the terrible reality that whether we like it or not, we are in a war and that this whole world is under the power of the evil one. Now, that is not alarmist, that is just simple Bible. And the Bible teaches that Christians have been dropped, as it were, behind enemy lines as guerrilla fighters. We are fighting behind the lines, but we are in a war.

And if you don’t get that, then you don’t get anything about what your life is about or what your family’s life is about. You won’t understand the challenges that you face. You won’t understand why bad things happen to you. You won’t understand human history. You won’t understand the history of the Christian church or the history of the Jewish people. If you don’t get the idea that you and I are in a war, then life will be an utter mystery to you.

But it is not just for the sake of insight that I have been teaching on spiritual warfare. It is, more importantly, so that the Vineyard might know how to protect itself and might arm itself for the battle that we are involved in. I understand that we want to believe that the war is not so serious. I understand that we would prefer a cease-fire so we could all go on summer vacation. Can’t we carve out a little zone of peace in this world? Can’t we get away from the warfare for a while? Not even when you have made lots of money and have a great car - the spiritual warfare just beams right into your BMW. No escapes.

There is, of course, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and we can begin to have peace with each other as we learn to forgive one another and learn to love one another. But the Bible is a book about war. If you took out a yellow marker and went through the Old Testament and just marked up all the passages in the Old Testament involving the Israelites at war with its neighbors, a physical picture of spiritual warfare [that is, of course, part of why the Old Testament is given, right? It is given to us as an example, a physical picture of spiritual realities.], if you marked up all of the passages in the Old Testament in which the nation of Israel was called to do battle, to go to war against its pagan neighbors, and then you continued with the yellow marker in the Old and New Testament and marked up every passage involving demons, Satan, evil spirits, unclean spirits, warfare, battle—you would find that virtually your whole Bible was highlighted. Warfare is a major lens through which you are to look at the world.

Now, when you begin to look at the world this way, certain things come into sharper focus for you. It is easier to be urgent in our spiritual lives, to be really sharp and attentive, rather than lackadaisical when we understand that we are in

a constant state of war. See, we make different provisions for war than we make for peace. We are willing to make greater sacrifices when we are in a war. We use different kinds of protections and precautions for ourselves and our kids. You pray differently when you really believe that you or someone you love is in danger, don't you? Aren't your prayers more fervent when you sense a real need or real danger? It's not just dribbled down your mouth off your chin if you think your child is lost or a parent is dying. There's fervency in prayer.

Further, when I begin to explore the link between my sin and possible demonization, sin takes on a whole different complexion. I don't know about you, but as a result of praying for many, many demonized people, sin has taken on a very different complexion to me. See, it is one thing to view sin in isolation and say, oh well, so what if you are disobedient to God. You play kind of loose with something that you know to be truth. So what? You can always confess it.

It is another thing to watch people be drawn progressively under the power of Satan to the point that they lose the ability to really make free choices. When you start praying for somebody whose will and very body and members are in the grip of the demonic, you realize the horrible effect of progressive acts of disobedience. I don't know how you feel, but if you have ever prayed for somebody who is demonized, or if you feel yourself really trapped and in bondage, sin takes on a whole different complexion. It is really one thing to be able to just sort of easily confess and get something over and it is another thing to feel yourself truly a slave to sin, to have the continual sense of guilt and shame and uncleanness.

I am teaching about spiritual warfare so that you might take certain realities very seriously. So that you may know how to protect yourself and your family. And so that the church, this church, the Vineyard, might not be spiritually neutralized. The Lord has a calling on this church. The larger the church gets, the more possibility that we have to really impact the social, spiritual, cultural environment that we live in central Ohio which has always been my hope, to ultimately impact the fabric of life in central Ohio. As people get drawn out of the world, as their thoughts get converted, and they go back into their work place as converts, those folks are going to have impact in their various work environments. You are salt and light now as you go out into the world.

But I do know that if Satan cannot have you as a hell-bound person, then he has a back-up plan, Plan B, and that is to make you a spiritually neutralized person. If Satan can't draw you to hell by keeping you blind to the claims of the gospel, then Satan's back-up plan for your life is to have you be entirely neutralized by getting you in the grip of some powerful sin. Grabbing onto your will in some way. It is the plan of Satan to cancel you out and in a larger way to cancel this church out. To get the church so wrapped up, so tied up and knotted up that it can't fulfill its call and mission in central Ohio or to the world.

Satan would just love if the salt would lose its saltiness. And this is the one thing that God does not want. He does not want you to be neutralized. He wants you to have an impact in your family, with your parents, in your neighborhood, in the school system, at your job. He wants you, Christian, if you really have a sincere relationship with Christ, to bear fruit for Jesus.

Now, I want to talk very briefly about Christians and demonization before we look more explicitly at the link between sexual sin and demonization. This business about Christians being demonized is quite controversial in the church today. So I feel a need to briefly talk about this. I am not going to spend a great deal of time on this. It is interesting to me to note that as a historical matter, so far as my research has indicated, the question of whether a Christian could be demonized did not arise in the church for the first 1800 years of the church's history. It was simply assumed that Christians would be involved with the demonic. And certainly in the early church we have many, many reports of Christians with demonic problems. Gregory the Great, one of the church fathers, has reports of delivering Christians from demons.

It really was not until the late 19th century that you had a hardening of positions in the Christian world as a portion of the Christian world began to be more and more anti-supernatural. Into the 20th century, as parts of the Christian church began to define itself over against the emerging Pentecostal movement you find for the first time this unusual teaching, at least from a church history perspective, this unusual teaching that Christians could not be demonized.

And so the controversy arose for the first time in Christian history with a large portion of the church, namely Pentecostals and charismatics, along with Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and many other groups, saying that Christians could be demonized and another portion of the church, namely some conservative evangelical elements, saying that Christians could not be demonized.

Now, one of the areas that has brought an unfortunate level of confusion to the discussion is the language we use. See, the biblical word for somebody who is under the influence of a demon is the Greek word *diamonizomai*. And unfortunately in the King James version when the translators back in the 1600's were translating the Greek word *diamonizomai*, they translated that word "demon-possessed." Much of the controversy regarding whether a Christian could or could not be demonized would have been eliminated if the King James translators would not have come up with the unfortunate, and very unhappy phrase, demon-possessed.

It would have been much better if the translators would have translated the Greek "under the influence of a demon" or "demonized." But because the King James translators chose this unfortunate term "demon-possessed," many people got into the rather irrelevant debate on how a Christian possessed and owned by God could ever be possessed and owned by a demon.

Every one ought to agree, charismatics, Pentecostals and conservative evangelicals, that Christians can be possessed only by God and never by a demon. It is quite clear that only one spiritual entity can possess a Christian, namely God. The Bible says that we were bought with a price. The Bible says that Christians have the down-payment of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1 that guarantees our inheritance. So let's stop talking about whether a Christian can be demon-possessed. The answer is no. A Christian cannot be possessed by a demon.

The issue, rather, is whether a Christian can come under the control or influence of a demon. And I think biblically the case can be made that there are

increasing levels of demonic influence that a Christian can fall under short of ownership or possession by a devil. If you picture a continuum in your mind from temptation to oppression that is through some sort of outward press, pushing down from the outside, weighing down, oppression through some kind of inward control or grip on the will, all the way to possession, I believe it would be appropriate to draw a very sharp line, a very thick line between inward control and an inward hold on the will and possession.

What we would say, biblically, is that a Christian can very definitely be in slavery, in bondage, have their wills gripped by a spirit, but cannot be owned or possessed. Now, why do I think that a Christian can be under some level of spiritual influence or control by a demon? Let me list a few reasons.

Number one: To those who would object and say, "No, no, no! You cannot fall under the influence of a demon. You cannot be controlled now that you are a Christian" I would ask, "Why are there so many passages in the Bible warning us about Satan and about demons, if we were not in some serious danger of falling under demonic control?" Are the passages that tell us to put on the full armor of God and call us to alertness in spiritual warfare simply theoretical or are they real? Is there real warfare going on or is it just sort of up there, abstract, away from us? Do we need to take warfare seriously? Are there real casualties in this war, just as there were in ancient Israel? Is there a real danger of being spiritually neutralized?

As I read the scriptures, I take them seriously. When the scriptures say that "Satan is a roaring lion seeking someone to devour" in 1 Peter 5:8, I believe that we can literally be devoured. And in 1 Timothy 3 when the scriptures say that we ought not to pick as an elder someone who is a novice lest they fall into the trap of the devil, it seems to be that it is a real possibility that someone could be ensnared by the devil. In Ephesians 4 it says, "Don't let the sun go down on your anger, don't give the devil a foothold." Again, it would appear that it is very possible that through unforgiveness and anger the devil can gain a foothold into your life.

So, in dealing with the issue of the possibility of demonic control in a Christian life, I would first of all ask, "Why are there so many warning passages if this was not a real danger?"

Secondly, I would point to several illustrations in the scriptures of believers who seem to have fallen under the grip of Satan. The classic Old Testament example of a believer who fell under the power of Satan is King Saul. King Saul was chosen by God as the King. I take it that he was a believer, otherwise he would not have been chosen to be King by God. It says that he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. He actually prophesied. And then, as a result of rebellion and contact with the occult, he opened himself up to evil spirits, ends up in explosive rage (1 Samuel 18:8), murder (18:10-11), fear (18:12,29), witchcraft (28:1-25) and suicide (31:4).

In the New Testament in Luke 13, we have the example of the woman who is called a "Daughter of Abraham," part of the believing family of God, bound by a spirit of infirmity. And in Acts 5, we have the example of Ananias and Sapphira, who, as you read the passage from Acts 4 to Acts 5, were certainly part of the

believing community, although we don't have their statement of faith in our files, it does appear that Peter treated them as part of the believing community. And yet, Peter says to Ananias and Sapphira that Satan had filled their hearts. That word "filled," regarding Satan filling Ananias and Sapphira's heart, is the same word that Paul uses in Ephesians 5 when he exhorts us to be "filled with the Holy Spirit." Here were believers terribly under the influence of a demon.

Of course, all of us read the scriptures through the lenses of our own personal experience. This is unavoidable. We have a vantage point, what we see depends on where we stand. And I come to the scriptures and come to life with a vantage point of having prayed for dozens and dozens of honest, true believers—people who had an orthodox confession of their faith, who believe that God is a trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, who have given their hearts to Jesus and have received the Holy Spirit into their lives, who trust in the saving blood of Christ for salvation alone and in nothing else. I have met dozens of such people and have prayed for dozens of such people, who manifested demons. It doesn't take very long for a person's theology to be revised regarding the demonic when you actually see a demon manifest or talk to a demon.

It is certainly one thing to carry on the debate in the abstract. Can a demon get a hold of a Christian or not? It is quite another thing to see a demon manifest and carry on a discussion with a demon standing there. It is, by the way, interesting to me that conservative Christians believe that people can be in terrible darkness and sin, adultery, drunkenness, violence, and still involved in all kinds of sin and have the Holy Spirit, that somehow the Holy Spirit can live in an environment of terrible sin, but the Holy Spirit cannot dwell side by side with the demonic. I don't see really that much of a difference there.

But, I have to admit to you that I am reading the scriptures, to some degree, through the lens of having had dozens and dozens of encounters with the demonic—having had demons speak to me and throw somebody on the ground, just recently in Norway, having a person speak in a demonic tongue, watching people's body's writhe as we ask the Holy Spirit to come on them.

Now, what I want to do in offering you all some level of protection is to suggest that scripturally speaking, there are pathways, entry points to our spirits. There are different doorways through which Satan can carve a road, an entry point, to have a grip on a person. What I observed from the scriptures is that there are basically three major routes through which Satan obtains an inward grip on someone's spirit. I am going to explore them over this next month.

The first major inroad to our spirits that I am going to talk about is sexual sin. That Satan grabs a hold of a person in the inward part of their being through sexual sin. Either the sin that they commit or the sexual sin that has been committed against them through some sort of abuse.

The second major hold that I observe scripturally, that pathway to the spirit, involves unforgiveness and unconfessed anger. Satan gains a foothold into people's lives as they choose to not forgive someone who has sinned against them.

Sexual sin, unforgiveness, and, third, Satan gains a hold in someone's life through occult or some other false spirituality or false religion. As people contact

the spiritual realm through occult activity, they come under the influence of the demonic and find themselves demonized. Of course, we can add to this list demonic influence through substance abuse and many other pathways of control, but for simplicity's sake I won't.

I started today's talk with a brief discussion of the connection between sexual sin and demonization. This is where I want to finish up today. You say, "Rich, why do you draw a connection specifically between sex and demonization? I mean of all the things that a person can be involved in in life, why do you raise the issue of sex as one of the key entry points to possible demonization, an inward hold on the will?"

Let me suggest just a few reasons why I do so.

Number one: It has always seemed to me to be quite interesting that evil spirits in the New Testament are often called "unclean" spirits. Not evil spirits, but unclean spirits. In Mark 5 we read of a man who is naked, demonized, and it says that he has these "unclean spirits living in him." And Jesus takes those unclean spirits and tells them to leave. And as a picture of their uncleanness, they go into an unclean herd of pigs who go rushing off a cliff.

It has always seemed interesting to me that evil spirits in the New Testament are often called unclean spirits. Because that is precisely what they do to a person in a person's mind and heart. They put a film over that person of uncleanness. And so often as people repeatedly sexually sin, what can be discerned spiritually is an uncleanness about them. That's what I saw in that man in Norway. Some folks, as a consequence of repeated exposure to sexually explicit material, just can't escape the barrage of images in their mind's eye. It becomes hard to worship, hard to even concentrate.

You have seen this, I am sure, perhaps in some of your work environments, people will joke about sexual things repeatedly when there doesn't seem to be any particular stimulation for that kind of sexual humor. Everything, for some people, has this sort of unclean feel to it. Men, you know the locker room humor that often is part of the culture of the work place. Perhaps some of you women have experienced that, I don't know. But there seems to me to be some kind of definite link between unclean spirits and dirty kinds of sexuality. It is appropriate that we call certain things dirty. Dirty minds and dirty words. Now, I know that is being eliminated from our vocabulary, but until 10 or so years ago, people did discern that there was something terribly unclean and dirty about certain kinds of sexual viewpoints.

But even more than just this reference to unclean spirits, we must begin to understand the biblical viewpoint that draws together the practice of sex and the practice of worship. There are two things that are linked together biblically, over and over again and form the bridge of our understanding of sex as an entry point to demonization and that is the idea of sex and the idea of worship.

You see, God created sex. He made it a good thing. It was designed for our enjoyment. It was designed for procreation. It was designed for pleasure. But there is a greater and more fundamental design in sex than simply our enjoyment or our pleasure or even procreation and that is that sex was to be a picture for us of spiritual union with God. Much of life is designed to be a picture of a

relationship with God. And sexual union, the intimacy that a man or a woman would have together in the act of intercourse, was designed at the very beginning to be a picture of spiritual union with God. That is why Paul, when speaking about sex in 1 Corinthians 6 speaks about us being one in body when we have sex with each other, but then he immediately shifts the metaphor, and says “but the one who unites himself with the Lord is one in spirit with him.” See, in Paul’s mind there is this connection, very clearly in 1 Corinthians 6, between becoming one in body and becoming one in spirit – union with someone through sex and union with Christ by the Spirit.

Sex and worship: the very words used for having sexual intercourse in the Bible are the same words used for the intimate worship of God. In Genesis 2 it says that Adam knew his wife, a metaphor for sexual intercourse. But that same word “knowing” - yada, is used of an intimate knowledge of God. Again, sex and worship. It is a picture of union, spiritual union.

It is for this reason that the old Christian mystics saw in the Song of Solomon this love poem, this romance poem, a deeper meaning of the spiritual union of Christ with his beloved bride, the church. You see, the directions are the same. The intentions are the same in marital sex, good sex, and in worship. And the direction and the intention is toward deep intimacy, toward union. You must see this link. Sex, in the Bible, is linked to spiritual union. And the purpose of sex in the Bible is not just orgasm and it is not just pleasure and it is not just procreation. Those are all wonderful but the ultimate purpose of sex in the Bible is oneness, it is connectedness, it is union, it is love that brings two people together. Two become one in the same way that worship brings us and God together. The purpose of worship is intimacy and union with God.

Now when you begin to draw this connection in your minds, sex and worship, union being the key link, the knowledge of another person at the deepest level possible, a special exclusive relationship, then you can begin to understand the profound danger of wrong sex, of sinful sex, of unholy sex. Because wrong sex, bad sex, sinful sex draws in wrong worship, bad worship, sinful worship and connects us to a whole other world of spirituality, a dangerous world.

See, there is a danger in wrong sex that goes beyond sexually transmitted diseases. There is a danger in sinful sex that goes beyond unwanted pregnancies, or sexual dysfunction. The danger is opening yourself up to the demonic through wrong kind of worship.

Again, let me approach it from a different angle so that you can really get this. You will take more seriously, I hope, the whole business of sexual sin in your life. Through the book of Romans, Paul talks about presenting our bodies. And he says that in Romans 6, whatever we present our bodies to, the parts of our bodies—our arms, our hands, our mouths, our genitals, whatever we present the parts of our body to, to that we become a slave. As we yield parts of our bodies, we are becoming slaves to whatever we yield to. Slaves of righteousness, or slaves of sin. And many of us understand that we have yielded and yielded and yielded to the point of bondage and slavery. We understand that in our inner being.

But, interestingly, Paul picks up the theme again of our bodies in Romans 12 when he says, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual worship." The offering of our bodies is part of our worship. What you do with your body is connected to what you do with your worship. Good use of the body, good worship. Bad use of the body, bad worship. Bad worship, you become opened up to the demonic and you become a slave.

Has it ever occurred to you that in every one of the world's religions, as you look at them, there is a component outside of Christianity of unclean sex? Look at Hinduism and you will see woven into the very fabric of Hinduism this uncleanness. Go into a Hindu temple and you will see thousands of phallic symbols and sexual organs. In Hindu parades, they carry large sexual organs through the streets. Temple prostitutes existed in India until the British basically put an end to it at the beginning of the 20th century.

You see the same kind of uncleanness in Tantric Buddhism. Some of that uncleanness in Mormonism; in the Islamic view of heaven. Next week I will talk about the connections in the Old Testament with Baal and Ashura and sexual sin.

Satan knows what most of us don't. That if you get a hold of a man or a woman's genitals, you get a hold of that man or woman. He understands sex and worship. He understands opening one's self to images, to pornography, to fantasy, to masturbation, to homosexuality, to fornication—he understands what that does to your inner being. Sex is not just a bodily act, sex is an act of worship.

Well, let me finish with a few responses to this diabolical plan to hook Christians through the sexual misuse of our bodies. As I said, I am going to talk much more about this next week, but I can't preach on a subject without at least offering some way out, some healing.

The first prescription that I would offer today is to have each one of us monitor the radar screens of our minds. See, once you get the idea that you are in a war and you start living that way, moment by moment, day by day, I am in a war, then there is a certain vigilance and a certain urgency that you have as a regular part of your life regarding enemy attacks, missile firings, bombers overhead. And you monitor that. See, the place we start is with what comes into our minds.

Now, unfortunately, most of us have a peace-time mindset and we don't monitor what comes into our minds by way of demonic lies or demonic thoughts. We just find ourselves feeling certain things late in the day, having certain problems, but we rarely trace them back to the sowing of a lie six hours earlier, eight hours earlier, twelve hours earlier, that we allowed to be birthed in our minds and hearts.

The lie comes in early in the day that our value is based on our body shape or on someone else's opinion of us, or on some other faulty ground for evaluation. We allow that to be received without a fight. Later on in the day, we meet someone who has a nicer body than us, that creates further struggle, envy and discouragement. By the end of the day, you are in a full-blown depression or

angry and you have no idea of why you are so upset or depressed. It is because you haven't monitored the radar screen of your mind.

Now, monitoring the radar screen of your mind is absolutely essential in the area of sexual sin. And when you start to monitor what comes in, some of you are going to find that you are receiving thousands and thousands of messages, all kinds of lies and those lies need to be stopped at the border.

Before the missile hits all the way down in your spirit, you take them out. Which is the second thing—you send up anti-aircraft barrages, scud missiles to take out the in-flying fiery darts of the enemy.

Your anti-aircraft defense against the lies of enemy is the truth. The lie comes screaming in "You need to do this particular sexual activity in order to be happy. You need to masturbate. You need to fantasize. You need to imagine yourself with this other person. You need to watch this program. You need to drive to this bookstore. You need to watch this video." Whatever—the lie comes in.

You meet that lie not by passive receptivity, but with the truth. And so you throw up the barrage, missiles of truth, because you are at the radar screen and you see the attack coming. You meet the lie with the truth that says that this is a lie! If you need to shout it while you are in the car, or in your room, or on a walk, you just stop it. This is a lie. Just like that. This is a lie.

The truth is Ephesians 4:30:

"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

The truth is that I can never be happy while the Holy Spirit inside of me is sad. The truth is that this practice or thought pattern has never satisfied me in the past and will only increase my desire for more. The truth is that this is bringing me increasingly under demonic bondage. The truth is that whatever I submit the members of my body to, that is what I am going to become a slave to. You meet every incoming lie with the truth of the scripture. You monitor the radar screen, recognizing the lies coming in, you meet it with the truth.

The third thing that you and I must do is to begin to learn intimacy. The overall context for the healing of our sexuality is not just meeting lies with the truth, but it is learning true intimacy. Remember, sex is designed for union, intimacy, oneness. I can never be right or whole or well sexually while I, myself, am unable to be an intimate being, while I remain hidden, afraid, unable to be connected to another. Sex will always be wrong. Oh, I may not be outwardly acting on my sexual sin, that's good, but internally I will be tied in knots and have all these hooks in me that can be easily snared by any passing spirit.

The ultimate healing of sex is rooted in a growing ability to become intimate. That growing ability to become intimate begins with God. That is why we in the Vineyard stress worship and prayer so much. Because we know that there is healing and wholeness only as a person learns to open their spirit to the Holy Spirit, as you learn to draw into the presence of God, as you learn to wait upon him and hear his voice, as you learn to yield to him, so that you are not so afraid that he is going to reject you and all of your inner fears about what God is like are progressively stripped off, the beginning of healing sexually is found in a growing

intimacy with God. Worship and prayer, connection with the Holy Spirit, digging into the Word.

Intimacy is also found as we sexually isolated people, those of us who have never talked with anyone about who we are and what we are about, find a trusted friend, a pastor, a kinship or women's group leader and we begin to bring our stuff to the light. It is Satan's intention to isolate us, to wall us up behind the walls of shame and guilt and uncleanness, feelings of isolation.

And as we confess to another human being, as we bring who we are to the light, we find those demonic walls that cut us off brought down. Intimacy, connectedness with another person, brings healing to us internally.

And third, for those of us who are married, those of us who are dating, we must learn patterns of intimacy beyond sex. There is a way to give and receive love that does not involve sex. One of the things God has been doing inside me is helping me to be aware of and then talk about my feelings, who I really am and what I'm feeling, which is not that easy for American men. Married people, single people, we need to learn this: That much of what drives sex is our inability to find connectedness on another ground through real communication, through real self-disclosure, through prayer together. Intimacy. Intimacy. Real intimacy is the key to defeating the work of the enemy in our lives in the area of our sexuality.