

Reclamation News

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Volume 9, Fall, 2008



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Prayer Requests

For the families and friends attending our Renewed Hope group as they learn how to love those caught up in homosexuality without compromising their values.



For those attending the Exodus Regional Conference and the Love Won Out Conference; that all will have safe travel and receive what God has in store for them.



For our seminar, Reflecting the Truth in Love; that those attending would receive what God has planned for them, and that the speakers would be blessed as they share from their hearts.



For those finishing the Returning Sons program; that they would continue the healing journey that God has started them on.

Sex and Gender - A Biblical Perspective

Part 2 of 2

After they rebelled at Eden, man and woman no longer related to each other with the vitality and innocence they experienced before the fall. Genesis 3:7 tells us that when Adam and Eve saw their nakedness after the fall, they were ashamed and covered themselves. Because they were no longer moving towards each other from a dependence on their Creator, Adam and Eve were not freely able to enjoy the relationship the way it was designed to be enjoyed.

Everything Eve was as a woman and Adam was as a man was affected by the Fall. When a woman doesn't respond, but controls, that controllingness is a distortion and perversion of her femaleness. When a man doesn't take initiative in the midst of confusion and pain, but withdraws, that withdrawing is a distortion and perversion of his maleness. Eve shifted from responsive dignity to compulsive control. Adam shifted from competent leadership to threatened weakness.



And because we continue to live in a fallen world, the wondrous, God-given longings at the core of our identity as males or females have been damaged. We not only haven't received what our souls were designed to be given, but in many cases we received the opposite. It is at the core of our sexual identity we see the greatest potential for personal pain and/or destruction. We fear failing or being used and the ensuing pain of inadequacy, shame and rejection, so we resist fully expressing ourselves as male or female.

God created us with the capacity for relationship and impact; but we have no resources to do it on our own; therefore we desire the resources to fulfill those longings. We demand satisfaction now and avoid embracing our dependence. Because we are fallen beings, we will seek resources over which we have some control. In human relationships, it's easier to develop patterns of manipulation than attitudes of vulnerability. The more control we can exercise over the resource we turn to, the more attracted we are to it. Distorted longings lead to illegitimate pleasure that results in enslavement (addiction) to whatever it is we think is giving us pleasure or power.

The first place we experience pain and confusion is our homes. God

Continued on page 2

Coming Events

September 17 - 18 Focus on the Family's Love Won Out conference in Minneapolis, MN.



September 24 - 26 Exodus Regional, "Change My Heart: A Time of Healing" will be held at the Association retreat Center in Osceola, WI. For more information, check out our website: www.reclamationrc.org



September 28 We will begin our third 10-week session of In His Image.



October 22 - 23 "Reflecting the Truth in Love," will be held at Christ The Rock Community Church in Menasha, WI. For more information, check out our website: www.reclamationrc.org

Sex and Gender

Continued from page 1

designed the family to be the place where we develop our sexual identities. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go." This means that parents need to be intimately involved with their children, to understand, encourage and affirm their child's unique personhood.

When we cover over our longings in order to resist being vulnerable, then we will feel longings for something other than God. Our detachment will take one of two forms: (1) The passive, weakened person who can neither truly hear the voice of our Lord nor respond to it in obedience. Or (2) The aggressive, hardened individual whose posture of control and strength is but a shell to protect him/her from the pain and confusion within.

We have become bent away from God and bent towards others. This brokenness takes place at two levels. The first is in the style we adapt to relate to others. Remember, the effect of the Fall on femaleness is control, and its effect on maleness is withdrawal. Let's think of these styles on a spectrum.

As we resist dependent and vulnerable living, there is a diminished opportunity to legitimately enjoy our sexuality. The legitimate desires of our souls now become distorted.

The core of our being is committed to finding ways to satisfy our longings for sexual wholeness that do not require vulnerability.

With this foundation of sexuality, I would like to look at

the idea of a scale of threatened sexuality and personal accountability. There is a full spectrum or scale of threatened sexuality on which we all fall. Attached along that scale is a condition of vulnerability to a sexual brokenness.

The following is a description of the associated sexual problems to the various levels of acquired threat:

L1	L2	L3	L4	L5

LEVEL 1(L1) — HETEROSEXUAL DYSFUNCTION (premature ejaculation, etc.), MASTURBATION, HETEROSEXUAL LUST

LEVEL 2(L2) — VOYEURISM, EXHIBITIONISM

LEVEL 3(L3) — TRANSVESTISM, FETISHISM, SADOMASOCHISM

LEVEL 4(L4) — HOMOSEXUALITY, LESBIANISM, BI-SEXUALITY

LEVEL 5(L5) — TRANSSEXUALISM (sex-change)

"As we resist dependent and vulnerable living, there is a diminished opportunity to legitimately enjoy our sexuality."

We are all born with a sin nature into families that love and nurture us

Continued on page 3

Classic Thoughts

*Larry Crabb and C.S. Lewis
on love and vulnerability*

“We really are on a ‘mission’ in life. When others hurt us, we really can respond well. Yes, we are responsible to love, but we can’t pull off the obedience involved in loving others. This makes us dependent on God. Life is not in facing your pain: **Life is in loving.** This doesn’t just mean at any given moment that we should ‘be who we are,’ but rather it means directing all our energy toward the other. None of us does this, but we all can come closer. **The degree to which we come closer to loving is the degree to which we’ll experience joy in our lives.**”

- Dr. Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr.

“Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket - safe, dark, motionless, airless - it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.

To love is to be vulnerable.”

- from The Four Loves by
C.S. Lewis

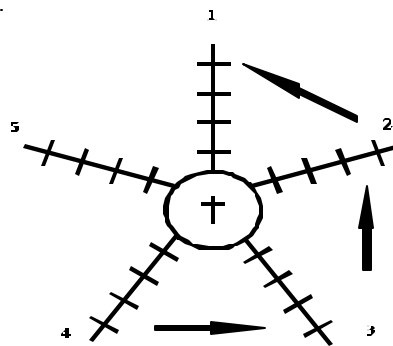
Sex and Gender

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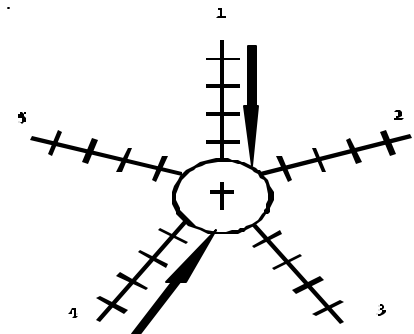
imperfectly. It is like we are a bottle with our necks pointed away from God. Because our God-given dignity is damaged, we see our legitimate sexual longings as something either in need of compensation or protection rather than something to be embraced. The level at which we are threatened is due to a number of factors, among which is our victimization from living in a fallen, imperfect world.

While the straight line spectrum helps explain threatened sexuality and the corresponding sexual sin, it does not indicate personal accountability or spiritual maturity. Another element needs to be added, which is a person’s response to situations that impact his area of threatened sexuality. Not everyone falls into a sexual deviance simply because he is at a certain level of threat or brokenness; the level of threat should be seen as a condition of vulnerability to rather than a predisposition for a sexual sin. Just because the stage is set, doesn’t mean the play must go on.

Rather than a straight line, a wheel is a more accurate way to visualize broken sexuality. Here, the hub of the wheel is our true sexual identity, which is experienced only in relationship with Christ. The different levels of threat are the spokes coming from the hub. This more accurately shows that any one level of brokenness is not any worse than the others (*see figure 1*).



**Figure 1 - False Change Shift
in Level of Brokenness**



**Figure 2 - True Change -
Dependency on Christ**

Now it can be seen that maturity isn’t related to the *area of struggle* but to how we respond at that particular level of sexual brokenness. It is not our responsibility to move from one level of brokenness to another level; rather, the distance from the hub at any particular level is an indication of our maturity (*see figure 2*).

It is interesting to note that the distance between each spoke decreases as you get closer to the hub. The closer we draw into dependence on Christ and walk in our true sexual identity, the closer we all are in relating to each other the way we were designed, regardless of the level of threat. It is not our responsibility to move from one level of threat to another level.

In relation to sexual brokenness, then, real change should not be seen as a shift to heterosexual lust. Change should be viewed in light of how one re-

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Reclamation Resource Center

offers a variety of services including pastoral counseling, original tapes and brochures, speaking engagements, as well

as:

Renewed Hope An open drop-in group for families and friends of those involved in a gay or lesbian lifestyle.



Broken Yoke An open drop-in group for those with homosexual attractions who are curious about and/or pursuing change.



In His Image A closed group for individuals committed to pursuing change from unwanted homosexual attractions. (*Application required*).



Reflecting the Truth in Love
 Our annual seminar on the issues of sexual brokenness, homosexuality, change and compassion.

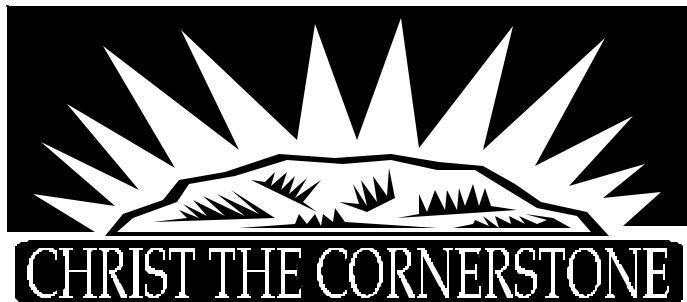


Reclamation News A quarterly newsletter.

Sex and Gender

Continued from page 3

sponds to temptation and grows toward dependence on the grace of Christ. Dependence on Christ will free anyone from their fear of moving into their world as sexual beings. That freedom will direct their energy not only to abstinence from sexual sin, but also to loving God and others.



While we know that Jesus is the answer, we often don't know what the questions are. Jesus is the solution for those who are sexually broken. He offers us:

- a. **Love:** His is the only love that is great enough to heal those whose brokenness is rooted in an unmet need for love. Most often, our sexual problems are a misguided search for love, often coming from a need so deep that nothing else can fill it. But Jesus can.
- b. **Affirmation:** He is the only one who has the authority to give us the affirmation that we crave. For so many, sexual issues are a problem of identity and we seek to be affirmed by others based on the world's standards of acceptance. But the Bible says that we were created through Jesus Christ, and so He has the absolute authority to declare who we are.
- c. **Power:** He is the only one who has the power to change our lives. When we surrender to Jesus, we come into contact with the very power that has overcome sin and death itself.

The direction that needs to be chosen is not unique to the problem of sexual issues, but one that is common to all Christians - holiness. Removing anything that prevents one from knowing and loving God is the goal that should be set. Basic Christian disciplines (understanding ourselves in the light of God's truth, knowing God, lovingly relating to others, and understanding spiritual warfare) are essential to the restoration process. The only real differences are the applications of these chosen directions. The basic approach is still simple (but not simplistic) - those who diligently seek Him will find Him.

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Reclamation News is published quarterly by Reclamation Resource Center. Reproduction of material is prohibited without written permission from Reclamation Resource Center. Our mission is to help individuals seeking freedom from unwanted same sex attractions. We also desire to equip the Church to better understand the issue of homosexuality and thus minister to individuals affected by homosexuality.

Editor Mike Levenhagen

Reclamation Resource Center is a member of Exodus international, North America. We are an outreach of Christ The Rock Community Church, Menasha, WI. Doctrine and policy information available upon request.