

Escaping Sexual Addiction

Colossians 3:5 HCSB Therefore, put to death whatever in you is worldly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.

Our society positively oozes sex. It is obsessed with it. It permeates our literature. It saturates our movies. Our most popular TV shows drip with sex, whether implicitly or explicitly. Comedians cannot seem to have a successful routine that doesn't include illicit sex in some manner. Our high school kids dress in a way to elicit sexual responses. They attend parties where partners are exchanged.

Democratic State Senator Heather Steans of Chicago is trying to get Senate Bill 1619 passed. SB 1619 mandates that all elementary and secondary public schools that offer sex education or sexual health education programs must choose only programs from a list of curricula approved by the Illinois Department of Human Services. The only approved curricula would be so-called "comprehensive sex education" *programs which include condom-training, teaching "tolerance"(i.e. approval) of homosexual lifestyles; various ways of sexual self-gratification; condom usage; information on how to be close to a person without having intercourse, including "body massage, bathing together, masturbation, sensuous feeding, fantasizing, watching erotic movies, and reading `erotic books and magazines."*¹

Another program for adolescents, "Be Proud Be Responsible," states, *"Go to the store together. Buy lots of different brands and colors [of condoms]. Plan a special day when you can experiment. Just talking about how you'll use all of those condoms can be a turn on"*²

While the latest government studies show that abstinence education is effective with children, the powers that be in Illinois plan to scrap the state's long-standing abstinence-until-marriage education in favor of explicit sex training. This sex education bill requires "age appropriate" education. *According to the manual of SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States), which must be used by State authorities (along with Planned Parenthood guidance), states that teaching masturbation is appropriate for children ages five to eight!*³

If you are shocked that such matters would be brought up from the pulpit, then why would you not resist it in your grade schools? If this is the type of sex education our society is offering our children, small wonder that they are growing up sexually promiscuous!

Far too many of us, even in this congregation, struggle with sexual addiction. Some of our people are trapped by this debilitating lifestyle, but the Scriptures assure us that with God all things are possible and I promise you that transforming your life into one marked by purity is very possible.

How do you know if you're addicted?

You can use the acronym SHAME:

Secretive. If what you're doing must be kept in the dark, even from your spouse and other loved ones – then you might be addicted.

Hollow. If it does not involve a passionate relationship with your spouse or improve that relationship but you keep doing it anyway – then you might be addicted.

¹ from Focus on Kids - ages 9-15

² p.80

³ From "Bill Status of SB1619" 97th Illinois General Assembly 3/15/11

Mood-Altering. If it means you're not facing difficult feelings but instead running to an easy release, or if your mood is depressed, angry, or bitter if you can't satisfy your illicit practice – then you might be addicted.

Essential. If you think of this activity as not being an option, if you schedule other things around this activity, or risk vital relationships or your job in favor of this activity – then you might be addicted.

Do I need to remind you of the Apostle Peter's teachings?

- **2 Peter 2:18-20 HCSB** For uttering bombastic, empty words, they seduce, by fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in error. (19) They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them. (20) For if, having escaped the world's impurity through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in these things and defeated, the last state is worse for them than the first.

We use the metaphor of Highlanders and Lowlanders a lot in this church. Highlanders are those who follow God, make His Son their king, and look forward to having their citizenship in the high city of Zion confirmed at the resurrection. Lowlanders are those who willfully choose this low world along with its god Lucifer and his culture of materialistic, sensuous narcissism.

When you choose Lowlander's emphasis on illicit sex, your life will follow the following downward spiral.

The Downward Spiral of Sexual Addiction

- **James 1:14 HCSB** But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires.

Curiosity. Presented with the temptation there's an assent to satiating that natural curiosity.

- **Galatians 6:7-8 HCSB** Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap, (8) because the one who sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.

Addiction. Satiating that curiosity and you get a little pleasure. Indulge that pleasure often enough and the recurring stimulus secretes epinephrine from the adrenal gland into the blood stream. Epinephrine imprints emotional memories into the brain. Soon those memories and desires will surface no matter how hard you want to forget them.

- **Ephesians 4:17-19 HCSB** Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their thoughts. (18) They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. (19) They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.

Escalation. Soon the receptors need more and more stimulus to grant you the same amount of pleasure. The need for more shocking and explicit sexuality steadily grows. This process is described in the Bible as "hardening one's heart."

- **Jeremiah 6:15 HCSB** Were they ashamed when they acted so abhorrently? They weren't at all ashamed. They can no longer feel humiliation. Therefore, they will fall among the fallen. When I punish them, they will collapse, says the LORD.

Escalation – hardening of one's heart, will lead to the following step in the downward spiral.

Desensitization. Look at, purchase, indulge, or participate in enough shocking sexual activity and it will not only become acceptable or normal – it will soon be unstimulating.

- [Galatians 5:19 HCSB](#) Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity,

Acting out. Notice the progression in Galatians 5:19. The sinner moves from sexual immorality which is a general indulgence of societal sin, to moral impurity which is personal indulgence of illicit sexual acts, to promiscuity which is routine participation in said acts.

You can see the same process described but avoided in Psalm 1:1.

- [Psalms 1:1 HCSB](#) How happy is the man who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path of sinners, or join a group of mockers!

The compulsion to act out what was previously only imagined or seen is driven by the fact that that “imaginary” stimulation is no longer satisfying.

Finally, we come to the bottom of that spiral.

- [Romans 7:15 HCSB](#) For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate.
- [Romans 7:24 HCSB](#) What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Despair. The addict is left with an utter disgust at his or her own behavior but a complete inability to do anything about it. That’s what sin does for you.

- [James 1:14-15 HCSB](#) But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires. (15) Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.

So How Do You Escape?

Frankly, outside of Jesus’ saving grace and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit – you’re toast.

- [John 15:4-6 HCSB](#) Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. (5) "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me. (6) If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

If you have turned your life over to Christ, you must begin to give over each and every dark closet to Him, throwing open the doors to His purifying light.

- [Philippians 2:12 HCSB](#) So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

One after the other each room in your life must be conquered by Christ until you’re old self has died and the new man in Christ stands alone, basking in the glory. How do you do this?

Decide you really want to be free. (1 Peter 1:13)

Dispel the myth you don’t need help. (Psalm 51:10)

Deal with any secret abuse. (Matthew 18:15-16)

Discern the initial needs that drove the addiction. (Psalm 51:6)

Determine to let Jesus be the answer. (Philippians 4:19)

Dedicate your life to the Messiah. (Luke 9:23-24)

As I gave you an acronym for determining sexual addiction, let me give you another for the way out of that addiction – Purity

Participate in an accountability group; especially one that deals specifically with sexual addictions. Meet with them regularly and be honest with them. Admit when you slip back into your old ways. Set realistic goals and guidelines.

- **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 HCSB** Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. (10) For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up.

Uphold boundary lines. With the help of a wise counselor, make a list of times, places and activities that lead to indulgence. With your accountability group set up boundaries, ways to avoid those times, places and activities or to curb the temptation that accompany them. Establish regular means of accountability to ensure your compliance.

- **Proverbs 27:12 HCSB** The sensible see danger and take cover; the foolish keep going and are punished.

Rid yourself of all sexual triggers. Get rid of all pornography, erotic paraphernalia – even get rid of your computer if you feel that you will figure out how to get around “net nannies.” Which is more important? Your soul or your access to email and ebay? Also get away from any people who may drag you back into your old ways. Discard even their contact information.

- **Isaiah 1:16 HCSB** "Wash yourselves. Cleanse yourselves. Remove your evil deeds from My sight. Stop doing evil.

Incorporate the saving power of Christ into each and every aspect of your life. Every day pray “Lord I’m relying on you to be my Redeemer, my Deliverer. In my weakness I need your strength.”

- **2 Corinthians 12:9 HCSB** But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me.

Take on positive habits or disciplines. Get involved in exercise, sports, regular sleep, new, healthy hobbies. Make a to-do list of fun, healthy activities and each time you’re tempted go do the next one down the list instead. What you’re trying to do is to get past that initial “urge” stage. Do it often enough and the brain will quit with the urges.

- **2 Corinthians 8:21 HCSB** For we are making provision for what is honorable, not only before the Lord but also before men.
- **Philippians 4:8 HCSB** Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable--if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise--dwell on these things.

Yield your mind to Christ. Take time every day to meditate on the Scriptures. Memorize the Scriptures. In a journal, jot down how to apply the Scriptures you study. Even try to imagine novel ways to apply those passages. Learn to employ your imagination usefully.

- **James 1:21-22 HCSB** Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and evil excess, humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to save you. (22) But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.