



THE PURITY OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

calling the Church to God's standard for sexuality

IRV "SARGE" WOOLF

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CALLING THE CHURCH TO GOD'S
STANDARD FOR SEXUALITY

Dr. Irv Woolf

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DEDICATION

Lovingly dedicated to my bride Elsie,
who consistently reflects the purity of the Bride of Christ.

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Revelation 19:7, 8

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FORWARD

Your decision to pick up this book shows that you are aware of what many men prefer to deny—the shameful secret of sexual impurity. Surprisingly little brings more conviction and shame to bear on a believer’s soul than sexual sin. Most Christian men do not need more reasons why they should not sexually sin; men need genuine hope *and* a practical plan filled with tried and true strategies they can implement to get out of the trap. Men want to hope for deliverance from the half-lives they live. But having tried and failed so many times over the years, they mistakenly conclude that it is either not possible or they must simply settle for less sinning. The myth that abstinence from sexual sin is not possible can be very compelling, even “approval-giving,” in a subtly twisted sense.

The enemy of our souls is charming, intelligent, observant, and patient. He is skilled like a fly fisherman who wades into the stream and casts his lure where it will most naturally come into men’s lives. He then invites men to accept an alternative to the truly satisfying. When the bait is taken and the hook is set, men become snared and held captive by Shame and Silence. Such a lifestyle need not be settled for—indeed, this is not the “life” our Father intended at all!

Those who lead these men successfully through to the other side of the dangerous stream need a field guide, strategic intelligence, and

a small platoon of brave men who can be trusted. Over the last several years a simple plan has been developed, implemented, and refined that has led thousands of us to victory over sexual sin. With this battle plan in hand, you as a pastor or lay leader can at last obtain sexual purity and the peace, joy, confidence, and boldness that come with it. You can then lead other men through the same strategic plan to join you in the ranks of *uncommon men of purity*. Just as King David had his mighty men of valor, you too can raise up mighty men of valor in your congregation—strengthening families, blessing marriages, and establishing strong role models for kids in the process.

As God desires to conform us in the image of His dear Son (Romans 8:29), you and the men in your congregation can see significant growth, maturity, and victory in other areas of life. You will discover how to protect and fight for each other as you bear one another's burdens and walk out of shame and silence together to reclaim purity.

Men desperately long for genuine help and hope—or at least they used to. Were it not for the overwhelming weight of shame, they would be clamoring at your door. However, most men believe the lie that no other men struggle as they do. Through our years of ministry in this area, we have come to realize this is a universal struggle for all men; frankly, this is why the program is called *Every Man's Battle For Purity*.

The beachhead has been established. It is time. You are being called to serve as God's leader in the battle for men's purity. These

are the tools and strategies to use. It is not a quick, easy plan—and it is not free—but it is tried and true. The freedom on the other side is worth every fear men will face and every challenge they will encounter. Countless others are praying that you will accept God’s call to engage in this most important battle.

As your heart longs to know God and walk humbly with Him, take courage and know that there is more than forgiveness for sexual sin. There is victory in daily life available to you and the men in your sphere of influence. As a transformation begins to take place, we speak not of compliance to obey, but of freedom from temptation to sexually sin. When that happens you will experience a new and refreshing sense of the life and freedom God intends for us.

As you take the important step of reading this book, I pray that the Spirit of God will not let you easily dismiss the call to walk in sexual purity as a follower of Jesus Christ. I also pray that you will not abandon the duty to lead and encourage others through this plan to victory in every man’s battle for purity. Pastor Irv Woolf (“Sarge”) is a courageous participant, creative program developer, and gracious mentor to others in this critical area. Pastor Irv Woolf is someone you can trust—believe me!

Dale Telle

Former director, Every Man’s Battle For Purity

Maplewood, MN

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I am grateful to many who have contributed to this book knowingly or inadvertently. I am grateful to Drs. Gary Oliver and Mark Laaser for their counsel and encouragement to persist in the challenging ministry of purifying the Church of Jesus Christ. When we first met, Gary was the director of the doctor of ministry program in marriage and family counseling at Denver Seminary in Denver, Colorado. Gary is a master communicator and his teaching changed my life. He believes that before any counselor can be used in the healing process of others, he must first be healed himself. This truism finds its roots in Luke 4:23: “Physician, heal yourself!” Those who minister to others should minister from a position of wholeness and strength, not weakness.

How does that happen? Gary challenged those he taught to work through a personal three-generation genogram. The project involved interviewing family members and family friends and working up an elaborate diagram of three generations of my family. I learned volumes about myself, why I am the way I am, and how my present has been shaped by my past. It caused me to come to grips with many of the sins of my past and those of my family. God has forgiven me and done a great work of healing in my life. For being God’s instrument in my healing, thank you, Gary!

Mark Laaser was my mentor on my doctoral thesis and has been

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my ministry mentor since the inception of Every Man's Battle For Purity in 2002 at Crystal Evangelical Free Church (now New Hope Church) in New Hope, Minnesota. Like Gary, I first met Mark when he came to Denver Seminary to teach a course on addictions. Being from Minnesota, Mark and I forged a friendship and an alliance to purify the Bride of Christ. Trained as a psychologist, Mark counsels hundreds of sexually addicted men, women, and teens. He also travels the world speaking on sexual addiction. He truly is an expert in the field. Mark has encouraged me to relentlessly pursue the purity of the Bride. His book, *Faithful and True: Sexual Integrity in a Fallen World*, and its companion workbook by the same title, were transformational in my life. I was forced to come to grips with my own lack of sexual integrity. That became the impetus for launching the men's ministry, Every Man's Battle For Purity, at Crystal Evangelical Free Church in 2001 and eventually the ministry, the National Coalition For Purity, in 2006. For being the match that God used to light the fuse of purity in my life, thank you, Mark!

I am also grateful to the many pastors who opened their arms and invited this fledgling purity ministry to partner with them in purifying their congregations. Without their courage and initiative there would be no National Coalition For Purity. Besides the pastors, so many men, women, and teens have helped shape this book, some inadvertently. My thanks to them all.

I want to single out four men who encouraged me to think

about what a pure denomination might look like: Tom Mouw and Dave Linde of the North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church of America; Elden Nelson, president of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, and Dr. Tim Ruden, Director of Life Solutions, Inc. I am grateful for the input of each man. They also helped shape my thinking.

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I would be remiss if I didn't extend my admiration and gratitude to those who have labored with me on this project: Carol Madison, who edited this book; David Wrase, who designed the cover; Brian Lund, who did the layout, and Dave Sheets and Bethany Press, who printed it. Thank you, friends!

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carrots.” Thank you, Elsie!

Finally, I want to give glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Holy One of Israel, David’s greatest Son. *He is purity personified.* I give Him all the glory and praise for this book and for His transformational work in my life. Thank you, Jesus!

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 2:15

The Church Is in Trouble

A previous generation called it “compromise.” One of the worst things that could be said of any born-again Christian was that he or she had become a “compromiser.” To be a compromiser was to either be worldly—meaning compromising with the world’s values and giving ground on biblical values—or to fellowship with those Christians who were worldly. It was a terrible thing in fundamental Christian circles in the 1950s to be called a compromiser; yet in the 2000s is that what the church has become? Has the church become a community of compromisers with the unsaved world? Has the church chosen to “join them rather than fight them”? If it has, the Church of Jesus Christ is in trouble.

External Trouble

All the research indicates that the church is being cooked by the sexualized culture in which she lives. Much like the proverbial frog in the kettle, Christians are simmering in a sexual stew. The sexual

messages all around them are boiling them alive and conforming them to the world. It is the single biggest issue hindering Christian men, in particular, from living in victory.

Besides the sexual messages, what other external issues are troubling the church? Probably the two biggest external issues impacting the church in America are materialism and the social issues of the day such as abortion, homosexual rights, cohabitation, and teen pregnancy.

Materialism and the church in America.

Jesus told His followers, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Lk. 12:15). The American church does not seem to believe Jesus’ warning. Like the world around her, many in the church worship at the altar of mammon (Mt. 6:24). They live for “stuff.”

What is mammon? Mammon is the Aramaic term for “worldly wealth.” More than money, it is also property and anything of value. As Hauck says,

In the New Testament μαμὼνᾶς (*mamonas*) occurs only on the lips of Jesus. In the first instance it means “property,” “earthly goods,” but always with a derogatory sense of the materialistic, anti-godly and sinful. In the earthly property which man gathers (Mt. 6:19 ff.), in which he erroneously seeks security (Lk. 12:15 ff.), to which he gives his heart (Mt. 6:21), and

because of which he ceases to love, Jesus finds the very opposite of God (Mt. 6:24 par.). Because of the demonic power immanent in possessions, surrender to them brings practical enslavement (Mt. 6:19 ff.). The righteous must resolutely break free from this entanglement and stand in exclusive religious dependence on God (Mt. 6:24 par.). This realistic view of the actual facts makes it impossible for Jesus to think of earthly possessions with religious optimism or to regard them as a mark of special divine blessing (Job 1:10).¹

Mammon can become addicting. Jesus said that it can master us and

force us to serve it (Mt. 6:24). Whenever something or someone masters us, we have become its slave and are in bondage to it.

The Apostle Peter declares, “. . . for a man is a slave to whatever masters him” (2 Pet. 2:19). Just like any addicting drug or

behavior, worldly wealth can be used by the devil to enslave us.

Whatever enslaves us is our god. How can we know if we are enslaved by something? When we purpose to quit and even try, yet we fail continually and find ourselves doing the very thing

¹ F. Hauck, Μαμωνᾶς, In Gerhard Kittel, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (G. W. Bromiley, Trans., Vol. 4) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), pp. 388-390.

we despise—we are enslaved.² The drug or behavior has gained power and mastery over us.

Worldly wealth can gain the same power and mastery over us as any drug can. Like a drug, we find ourselves thinking of it, desiring it, measuring our happiness by it, and coveting it in others. Like any drug, when we indulge in it, our mood is significantly elevated. Worldly wealth becomes the measuring stick for success. If you have a lot of possessions—especially if they’re expensive, really nice possessions—you must be successful because, after all, only successful people can afford expensive possessions. The term in the 21st century is “luxaholics.” *Urban Dictionary* defines a luxaholic as “a person with a healthy addiction to the finer things in life.”³ *A healthy addiction?* There is no such thing as a “healthy addiction.” All addictions are forms of idolatry that enslave.

We will know mammon has gained mastery over us when we shop to elevate our mood or shop for “fun” instead of out of necessity. Mammon has gained mastery over us when we look down on those who have less and think ourselves superior to them. Worldly wealth goes hand-in-hand with an attitude of superiority. Those enslaved to mammon begin to think they are somehow better, more skilled, more gifted—in

2 Consider Romans 7:19 where Paul echoes the cry of the addicted, “For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”

3 *Luxaholic*, In *Urban Dictionary* (Retrieved June 29, 2009, from <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=luxaholic>, 2008).

short, superior to those with little. Again, the words of Jesus ring in our ears as He warns, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Lk. 12:15).

Social issues and the church in America.

Besides materialism, the social issues of the day impact the church. The church is under great pressure from the surrounding culture to embrace abortion, homosexual rights, and cohabitation. No one has tracked the trends of the church better than The Barna Group. Located in Ventura, California, Barna has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors since 1984. Consider their table on morality:

Table #1
 Percentage of Adults Who Consider a Behavior to be “Morally Acceptable”⁴

	All Adults	Evangelicals	*Born Again	Other Faith	Atheist/ Agnostic
Gambling	61%	27%	45%	69%	75%
living with someone of the opposite sex without being married, sometimes called cohabitation	60%	12%	49%	70%	87%
enjoying sexual thoughts or fantasies about someone	59%	15%	49%	71%	78%
having an abortion	45%	4%	33%	45%	71%
having a sexual relationship with someone of the opposite sex to whom you are not married	42%	7%	35%	47%	69%
looking at pictures of nudity or explicit sexual behavior	38%	5%	28%	49%	70%
using profanity	36%	7%	29%	46%	68%

(Base: 1024 adults)

* indicates born-again Christians excluding evangelicals

4 The Barna Group, *Morality Continues to Decay* (November 3, 2003), Retrieved June 29, 2009, from The Barna Group: <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/129-morality-continues-to-decay>.

Although the church for the most part is holding her own against these sinful practices, there is great pressure to accept them all as normal. In addition there is pressure being put on the church and society by the homosexual community to accept homosexuality as normal. Although, according to Barna, only three percent of Americans are homosexuals, they wield a disproportionate amount of influence.⁵ The pressure brought by homosexuals comes in the form of homosexual clergy clamoring to be recognized by their denominations, homosexual couples demanding equal rights to marry and parent children, the relentless attempt to normalize homosexuality by the secular media, and stigmatizing any who oppose homosexuality as homophobic and intolerant. Will the day come in which clergy will be jailed for refusing to marry homosexual couples? Will American pastors be jailed for using “hate speech” if they preach from the pulpit that homosexuality is a sin? Knowing the moral drift we are experiencing as a nation, both seem inevitable.

In addition, the church is sadly not immune to divorce. Again, The Barna Group says,

Although many Christian churches attempt to dissuade congregants from getting a divorce, the research

⁵ The Barna Group, *Spiritual Profile of Homosexual Adults Provides Surprising Insights*, (May 22, 2009), Retrieved June 29, 2009, from The Barna Group: <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/13-culture/282-spiritual-profile-of-homosexual-adults-provides-surprising-insights>.

confirmed a finding identified by Barna a decade ago (and further confirmed through tracking studies conducted each year since): born-again Christians have the same likelihood of divorce as do non-Christians. Among married born-again Christians, 35% have experienced a divorce. That figure is identical to the outcome among married adults who are not born again: 35%.⁶

The external issues bombarding the church are multiple. Unfortunately, the church has to contend with even more. She is also being destroyed from within.

Internal Trouble

The Barna Group has been tracking American beliefs and behaviors annually since 1984. Commenting on the results of their 2007 survey, David Kinnaman, president of The Barna Group, declared,

Most Americans do not have strong and clear beliefs, largely because they do not possess a coherent biblical worldview. That is, they lack a consistent and holistic understanding of their faith. Millions of Americans

⁶ The Barna Group, *Born-Again Christians Just As Likely to Divorce as Are Non-Christians*, (September 8, 2004), Retrieved June 29, 2009, from The Barna Group: <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/194-born-again-christians-just-as-likely-to-divorce-as-are-non-christians>.

say they are personally committed to Jesus Christ, but they believe He sinned while on earth. Many believers claim to trust what the Bible teaches, but they reject the notion of a real spiritual adversary or they feel that faith-sharing activities are optional. Millions feel personally committed to God, but they are renegotiating the definition of that deity. In fact, one reason why beliefs fluctuate is that most Americans hold few convictions about their faith. For instance, even among those who disagree with orthodox views, many do so while hedging their bets. Most Americans have one foot in the biblical camp, and one foot outside it. They say they are committed, but to what? They are spiritually active, but to what end? The spiritual profile of American Christianity is not unlike a lukewarm church that the Bible warns about.⁷

There is trouble “within the camp.” The decline in church attendance and giving shows it. The passivity of male leadership in the church shows it. The movement away from expository preaching of the Bible toward culturally relevant preaching shows it. The decline

7 The Barna Group, *Barna's Annual Tracking Shows Americans Stay Spiritually Active, But Biblical Views Wane* (May 21, 2007), Retrieved June 25, 2009, from The Barna Group: <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/18-congregations/103-barnas-annual-tracking-study-shows-americans-stay-spiritually-active-but-biblical-views-wane>.

in biblical literacy among Christians shows it. The conformity by the church to the world in its choices of entertainment, use of alcohol, profanity, and attire shows it. The church is in trouble. Instead of being the thermostat of the culture and affecting the moral temperature, the church has become a thermometer of the culture, merely reflecting its moral values.

The Shepherds Are Not Guarding the Flock

Pastors are to guard the flock of God. The Apostle Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders to, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. . . so be on your guard!” (Acts 20:28, 31). Like watchmen in the ancient world, pastors are to warn their flocks of impending danger. Just as He held watchmen in the ancient world accountable for warning the city, so the Lord will hold pastors accountable for warning their congregations. Listen to the sobering words the Lord speaks through His prophet Ezekiel:

But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood (Ezek. 33:6).

Lest the reader think that my purpose is to bash pastors, this

is not the case. I love Christ’s Bride, the Church, and her shepherds. I myself have served her as a shepherd for more than 30 years. I understand the pressures and demands placed on pastors. I write not as an uncaring critic, but as a lover of the flock and her shepherds. It grieves me to see pastors who do not warn their flocks of the imminent danger of sexual sin. Like the band that played while the Titanic was sinking, many pastors go on with “business as usual” while the rising waters of sexual sin threaten to drown their people. Why is that? Why don’t pastors boldly confront sexual sin and lead their flocks into purity?

Reasons Why Pastors Don’t Purify Their Flocks

Quoting Pastor Jody Burgin, Mark Bergin (2005) writes, “The church is the most equipped organization on earth to deal with this issue. The biggest problem is getting pastors to take it on.”⁸ I believe that pastors want the people under their care to walk in purity, yet that is not happening. Why not? What prevents pastors who love their congregations and see the need for purity from leading their people to practice purity? Here are four reasons:

The personal struggles of pastors.

Many pastors themselves struggle with purity issues. Mark Laaser notes that his research indicates approximately 33% of all evangelical Christian pastors view pornography monthly.⁹ According to a survey done by *Leadership Journal* and reported in 2001, “Four in

8 Mark Bergin, “Pornagain” (*World*, 20, 2005), pp. 38-40.

9 Mark Laaser, *The Battle*, January 17, 2009.

ten pastors online have visited a pornographic Web site. And more than one-third have done so in the past year.”¹⁰ Whether the percentage is 33% viewing pornography monthly or yearly, it makes little difference in terms of the leadership capacity of the shepherd. How can the flock walk in purity if her shepherd is not walking in purity? The flock will be like the shepherd. How can the Lord bless a congregation that is led by an impure leader? I don’t believe that He will.

The shepherd who walks in impurity is crippling his flock and depriving her of the power of God. Can a pastor who is viewing pornography in private continue to publicly preach the Word of God with power and authority? He cannot. Though he looks good on the outside, he is walking in hypocrisy. Jesus is clear in His condemnation of hypocrites. In addressing the hypocritical Pharisees, Jesus declared, “. . . on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness” (Mt. 23:28).

Finally, consider the impact of that hypocrisy on the pastor’s family. Even if his wife and children do not have concrete evidence that he is engaging in sexual sin, they intuitively know something is wrong with him. Though he covers his tracks by erasing all incriminating files and history from his computer, cell phone, or PDA, they sense his lack of intimacy and emotional distance.

10 Leadership Journal, The Leadership Survey on Pastors and Internet Pornography (January 1, 2001), Retrieved July 5, 2009, from Leadership Journal: <http://www.ctlibrary.com/le/2001/winter/12.89.html>.

The sensitivity of the subject.

Many pastors don't want to rock the boat. They avoid controversial issues because they don't want to deal with the fallout that usually accompanies controversy. Unlike Jesus who never shied away from controversy (cf. Mt. 15:1-12, 23:1-39), these pastors avoid taking a stand on anything controversial such as abortion, euthanasia, homosexual rights, physician-assisted suicide, or sexual sin.

Sexual purity (and sexuality in general) is a sensitive subject. Yet God created sex and declared it good (cf. Gen 1:28-31). The Bible addresses sex directly and without shame. The Bible is replete with stories of sexual sinners. For starters, consider Lot's daughters, Samson, David and Bathsheba, Amnon and Tamar, Solomon and his 600 wives and 300 concubines, and the unnamed Corinthian man who had intercourse with his stepmother.

Then there are the passages that touch on sexual subjects. Old Testament passages with sexual subject matter include Genesis 19 and the homosexual sin of the Sodomites, the laws governing incest and sexual practices in Leviticus 18 and 20, the rape and murder of the concubine by the Jebusites in Judges 19-20, and the Song of Solomon.

For some pastors the sensitivity of preaching on sexual passages or topics is particularly difficult because of their personal modesty. They feel uncomfortable talking about the subject of sex. Some do not feel competent or qualified to talk about it. Dr. Tremper Longman III, who

has written a commentary on the Song of Solomon, indicates that he is regularly contacted by pastors to speak on sex in the Song of Solomon because they either feel unqualified or too embarrassed to talk about it.¹¹ My admonition to these modest brothers is to *preach the whole counsel of God* (Acts 20:27). “*All Scripture* is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16, 17; italics mine). Do not simply preach what is familiar or comfortable. Preach the Word!

Denial of the problem.

Quoting Mark Laaser, Bergin (2005) writes, “Mr. Laaser warns that any church lacking honest confessions of Internet pornography addiction has a problem on its hands. Whether an open and exposed mess or a hidden and destructive beast, the problem exists in every church. No news is bad news.”¹² He is right. Just because pastors do not want to acknowledge there is a problem does not make it any less a problem. It won’t go away. We need to be honest with ourselves and our congregations.

A number of years ago, our church hosted a pastor’s luncheon that was attended by several hundred pastors. Mark Laaser and I shared with these pastors the approaching wave of sexual immorality

11 Tremper I. Longman, *Biblical Exegesis and Marriage and Family Class Notes* (Paper presented at Denver Seminary, Denver, CO, July 28-30, 2004).

12 Bergin. p.40.

coming upon the church. I shared the practical strategy that our church had implemented. As we drew to a close there was a spirited time of discussion with the pastors. Clearly many recognized the problem facing the church. When we dismissed, numerous pastors came to speak with me privately. I recall one in particular who declared, “This is a good thing that you are doing, Irv. The church needs to be sexually pure. You must have a lot of sexual sinners in your church. I just don’t have any in mine.” I was flabbergasted. I know I must have said something to him, but I don’t recall. I was too stunned by his denial of the problem. Anonymous online surveys done by numerous researchers uniformly say that sexual sin is a problem in the church.¹³ Every church, regardless of size, location, denomination, or ethnicity, has men, women, and teens who are struggling with sexual sin—and many who are sexually addicted. Denial of the problem will not make it go away.

The lack of proven resources.

Finally, many pastors are courageous and willing to tackle the issue of sexual sin in their congregations if they have the proven resources to do so. The most common resources used by pastors are sermons, books on the subject, CDs or DVDs, a conference or seminar, support groups, Internet websites on sexual purity, a men’s retreat or

13 Two online surveys already cited in this book are: Leadership Journal, The Leadership Survey on Pastors and Internet Pornography (January 1, 2001), Retrieved July 5, 2009, from Leadership Journal: <http://www.ctlibrary.com/le/2001/winter/12.89.html>. The Barna Group, *Morality Continues to Decay* (November 3, 2003), Retrieved June 29, 2009, from The Barna Group: <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/129-morality-continues-to-decay>.

breakfast, and counseling. All are effective to a point, but the church needs more to overcome this unique sin (cf. 1 Cor. 6:18). The church needs a practical strategy for purity that will provide proven results. As a pastor I was looking for both strategy and results. Our church had tried all of the above approaches to purifying the congregation, but we were not going deep enough. We needed a practical strategy that could be led by laymen and was statistically proven as effective. The church can rely on anecdotal stories of the effectiveness of ministries for only so long. At some point she needs to know through statistical proof that ministries really work; that they really produce what they claim.

The Need for an Effective, Proven Strategy

There is a desperate need for an effective, proven strategy that crosses denominational lines and can be launched by a pastor but sustained by laymen. Taken from the Greek word, στρατηγός (*strategos*), meaning “military leader,” a strategy is the overall plan developed by the generals of an army as they prepare for war. *TDNT* says, “Where the noun στρατηγία (*strategia*) is used in a military sense it means ‘leading the army’ ... and sometimes ‘generalship.’”¹⁴ Pastors are the “generals” of the church. They lead the church and they need a strategy as they prepare for war against the enemy.

14 O. Bauernfeind, στρατηγός, In Gerhard Kittel, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (G. W. Bromiley, Trans., Vol. 7) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), pp. 701-713.

The primary purpose for writing this book is to provide pastors, denominational leaders, missionaries, elders, and men’s ministry leaders with a proven strategy to use in combating the devil and his weapon of sexual immorality. The strategy must have four components: (a) proven effectiveness, (b) prepared leadership, (c) powerful resources, and (d) practical support. Chapter six of this book provides a detailed explanation of the strategy and presents the four necessary components.

Why I Wrote This Book and My Qualifications

Why I Wrote This Book

This book is the sequel to my first book, *The Power of Purity: God’s Design for Sex in a Sex-Saturated World*. I wrote *The Power of Purity* to answer two questions: “Why should the church be pure?” and “What does it mean to be pure?” The book builds a foundation for purity on the holiness of God. With Christians as the primary audience, it details the theological as well as practical underpinnings for purity.

This book was written to answer the question, “How can the church be pure?” It builds on the foundation of the first book and focuses on the Church, the Bride of Christ. It is a clarion call to the local church to raise her standard of purity. The church for too long has settled for being “kind of” pure, “sort of” pure, or “good enough” pure. This book is a call to be holy even as God is holy (1 Pet. 1:16). It is practical and provides a proven strategy that can be implemented in any church

regardless of size, ethnicity, or denomination. The appendices contain a treasure trove of policies and screening instruments for pastors, elder boards, and counselors to use and adapt to their specific needs. Who is the target audience of this book? I wrote this book for leaders in the church: pastors, missionaries, elder boards, counselors, ministry leaders, seminarians, denominational presidents, district superintendents, and evangelists. It is for all who lead the Church of Jesus Christ and care about her purity.

May God use the principles of this book to purify the Bride of Christ in preparation for the soon return of His Son, Jesus Christ.

My Qualifications to Write This Book

“What right do you have to write a book on the purity of the church—and who are you anyway?” You have every right to ask these questions. We need to ask them of every author who proposes a plan or strategy for purifying the church. Does the author have the spiritual and educational qualifications and the expertise gained by experience to write on a subject?

Spiritual qualifications.

My most important qualification is that I am a born-again Christian. I received Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord in July 1970 in response to the prayers of my wife Elsie, and the preaching of Dr. Billy Graham. My children are all born-again Christians and, in turn, have married born-again Christians. This is not accidental or “good luck.”

It is how we trained them as parents. A man's family speaks volumes about his leadership in spiritual things. I was called by the Lord to serve His Church as a pastor in 1971 and have been obedient to the calling for more than 35 years. I have served four congregations as a full-time vocational pastor, having been a senior pastor, associate pastor, youth pastor, family ministries pastor, and pastor to single adults. I am an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Free Church of America. I love the church and have given my life to edify and sanctify her.

Educational qualifications.

I received my B. Sc. in psychology and business in 1969 from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. After a stint in the United States Air Force from 1969-1971, I received my M. Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1974. I went back to school in 1999 and received my D. Min. from Denver Seminary in Denver, Colorado, in 2006. My doctoral thesis was based on my research on sexual purity and its impact on marriage. It was entitled, "Participant and Marital Change Resulting from a Church-Based Men's Purity Ministry." I am a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors and a licensed clergyman in the state of Minnesota.

My experience.

I launched the first local church purity ministry in 2001 at a large (3000-attendance) church in suburban Minneapolis, Minnesota, and built on it for four successive years until I resigned from the church in 2006.

God opened the door for me to re-launch the local church purity ministry in a new format, the National Coalition For Purity. Since 2001, more than 7000 men, women, and teens have gone through the purity ministry. The statistical surveys done by our ministry indicate that 91% of the men who have successfully completed purity platoon have become significantly more pure, 86% of their wives indicate that their marriages are more satisfying, and 90% of the men surveyed indicate that their walk with Christ has improved dramatically.

The Nature of the Purity Ministry.

The purity ministry is not an easy ministry. It is attacking a stronghold in the church that Satan has controlled for millennia. It requires prayer because unless God moves church leaders to desire the ministry and compels men to attend, it will not happen. The purity ministry is not an easy ministry because it is committed to purifying the Bride of Christ, and the church presents a unique set of challenges—especially if she does not think she needs purifying.

The purity ministry is not a quick ministry. It requires time to change ingrained habits and learn more godly ways of living. The slowness of the purity ministry runs counter to our culture that wants everything quickly; however true lasting change takes time. Every Man's Battle For Purity (the men's purity ministry) takes approximately 30 weeks. That is off-putting to many, but for those who persevere, new and more pure lives begin to emerge.

Finally, the purity ministry is not an inexpensive ministry. Compared to the cost of traditional counseling, it is inexpensive. But compared to what most men currently pay for ministry in the church, it is costly. That is by design. Men in the western culture attach value and worth to things that cost; something that is free is seen as not worth as much.

I would also defend the cost in two other ways. It calls men to sacrifice in an area in which many are in bondage, namely money. Sacrifice is a good thing. As King David declared to Araunah in 1 Chronicles 21:24, “No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing.” Secondly, in a cost-benefit analysis, men receive more benefits in terms of resources and training than the cost they pay. They receive admission to four events, three books, three manuals, and, most importantly, the hope of freedom from bondage to sexual immorality.

In the following chapters we will look at the power of a purity ministry to purify the local church, its pastors, and whole denominations. Proposed models for both a men’s and women’s purity ministry in a local church are presented in Appendices L and M. May God use this information to help you, as a leader, to guide men in your God-given stewardship toward purity.

CHAPTER TWO

THE POWER OF A

PURE CHURCH

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25-27

The Need for Unity in the Church

Christ Jesus came into this world to die for relationships. He died that we might be reconciled to God, having a relationship with Him, His Father, and with one another. He died that His Church might be one even as He and the Father are one. Listen to Christ's words in His High Priestly prayer: "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:11). Christ is praying for unity, the oneness of the church. He asks His Father for help because unity does not come naturally to sinners. *Disunity* does.

What Is Unity?

Unity is oneness. It is marked by being likeminded and likehearted. Unity means being on the "same page" with one another. It

involves setting aside personal rights and agendas for the greater good of the whole. More than uniformity (which is external sameness) or union (which is connection with others with or without unity), unity can exist even amidst diversity. The church is to be in union with Christ—connected to Him through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Christ is the head, she is His body. The church is to be in unity with her head and with one another.

Is Unity in the Church Possible?

Is Jesus' prayer that "they may be one as we are one" just wishful thinking or a noble desire on His part? Is unity within the church reserved for heaven but impossible on earth? Although it may be theoretical and theologically correct, is it practically impossible? I believe Jesus meant for Christians to be one not only in heaven, but also here on earth. I do not believe Jesus was asking His Father for something He knew was impossible to fulfill. Unity is possible in the church, and it must break Christ's heart to see the fragmentation and petty divisiveness of His Bride.

One of the major reasons for division and disunity has to be the worldliness of the church. That is what the Apostle Paul said was causing divisions in the Corinthian church. He writes in 1 Corinthians 3:3, 4: "You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when

one says, ‘I follow Paul,’ and another, ‘I follow Apollos,’ are you not mere men?”

What prevents unity from occurring in the church?

The answer is worldliness—the sin of loving the world. What are some of the distinguishing marks of worldliness? Division, factions, jealousy, and quarreling are four marks that Paul pointed out to the Corinthians. Are those four marks seen today in the church? *Yes*. The church is not unified because local churches are too often marked by jealousy of one another and more focused on being right than maintaining relationships.

How can we bring about change that will result in unity—and is there a connection between unity and purity? My theory is that if we shift the focus of the church onto purity, unity both within the local church and between churches will occur as a byproduct. There is a clear purity-unity connection. Consider 1 John 1:7: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” When Christians walk in the light they are being Christ-like, for He is the light. According to John, to walk in the light is to be purified from all sin by the blood of Jesus. Therefore, Christians who walk in the light are those who are walking in purity from sin. The Spirit of God has applied the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ to their sins.

Once Christians are walking in purity they have fellowship [Grk.

κοινωνία] (*koinonia*) with others. Κοινωνία (*koinonia*) means “to share or participate” and comes from the word “to have in common.”¹⁵

If walking in purity is a prerequisite for true fellowship between individuals, then it is equally a prerequisite for true fellowship between churches. When believers or churches begin to share what they have in common, fellowship occurs—and in time unity blossoms.

Consider the unity of the Jerusalem church in the Book of Acts. In Acts 4:32 we read, “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.” Unity was the fruit of their fellowship. This passage also prepares us for the purifying of the church as the Lord slays Ananias and Sapphira for their sin against God (Acts 5:1-11). When the church is walking in purity with its sins cleansed by the blood of Jesus, it has fellowship within the church and with other churches. Purity produces unity of the Bride of Christ.

When churches focus on becoming the pure Bride of Christ, God will bless and honor their efforts. He wants the church to be holy as He is holy. When she starts to purify herself, amazing things begin to happen. The culture of the church begins to be transformed. When the culture of a local congregation changes and becomes more holy and Christlike, that church is more attractive to other churches. Like a moth to a porch light, other churches are drawn to purity. Barriers and defenses that once

15 William Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 438-440.

separated churches begin to drop as relationships are built and unity becomes a reality.

Changing the Culture of a Congregation

If my theory is correct, purifying the church will produce unity as a byproduct. How does purity change the culture of a congregation and what does that change look like?

Men are the key to changing the culture of the church.

I humbly submit that changing the culture of a church starts with changing men. Men are designated in the Bible as the heads of their families (1 Cor. 11:3, Eph. 5:23). As I wrote in *The Power of Purity*,

Men have been designed by God to lead. They are to be the heads of their wives and their families. Ephesians 5:23 says, “For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.” The word used for “head” in the New Testament is the word κεφαλῆ [kephalē] (English word, “cephalic”) which is translated, “when used literally, head, of a man or beast; when used figuratively, to denote superior rank.”¹⁶ Wayne Grudem says, “A word’s meaning is found by examining its use in various contexts. *Kephalē* is found in over fifty contexts where it refers to people who have authority over others of whom

they are the “head.”¹⁷ Men have the role as the head of their wives and families. The responsibility of a head is to lovingly lead.¹⁸

In addition to functioning as heads of their families, men have been given responsibility to lead the church as elders (overseers, pastors) and ministry leaders (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). They serve as head of the church under the greater headship of the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4). So when men begin to change, it affects entire families and churches. In the systems theory of counseling, this is called “wholeness.” The idea of wholeness is that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” In a system such as marriage or a family or a church, “If one member in the system changes, then all members of that system will change because of that one member’s behavior and the reverberating change created as each member responds to other members’ changes.”¹⁹

When men in a congregation begin to walk in sexual purity, other areas of their lives begin to change for the better. They become spiritually energized because they have ceased to function hypocritically. They begin to worship and sing from the heart. They begin to give sacrificially. They become ministers who want to serve the Lord with the gifts He has given them. They become the spiritual leaders of their families. They

17 Wayne B. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More than 100 Disputed Questions* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2004), p. 202.

18 I. Woolf, *The Power of Purity: God’s Design for Sex in a Sex-Saturated World* (Osseo, MN: Hopewell Publishing, 2009), p. 103.

19 J. Brown & D. Christensen, *Family Therapy: Theory and Practice* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1999), p. 11.

become better husbands and fathers. Marital satisfaction of their wives improves markedly.²⁰ When those changes begin happening in men, the culture of the congregation begins to change in response. The greater the critical mass, the faster the culture changes. This means that the more men are willing to walk in sexual purity, the faster change will occur in a congregation.

A Case Study on a Contemporary Congregation that Benefitted from Focusing on Purity

You might be asking, “Is all this theoretical or have you actually seen this take place in a congregation?” It is not mere theory. I have had the privilege of serving on the pastoral staff of a large Evangelical Free Church in suburban Minneapolis, MN. At present, this is the only congregation for which I have quantifiable statistical evidence. Following are a table and three charts for the years 2002-2005, when the purity ministry was operational at the church.

20 I. Woolf. *Participant and Marital Change Resulting from a Church-Based Men's Purity Ministry* (Denver, CO: Denver Seminary, 2006), p. 190-192.

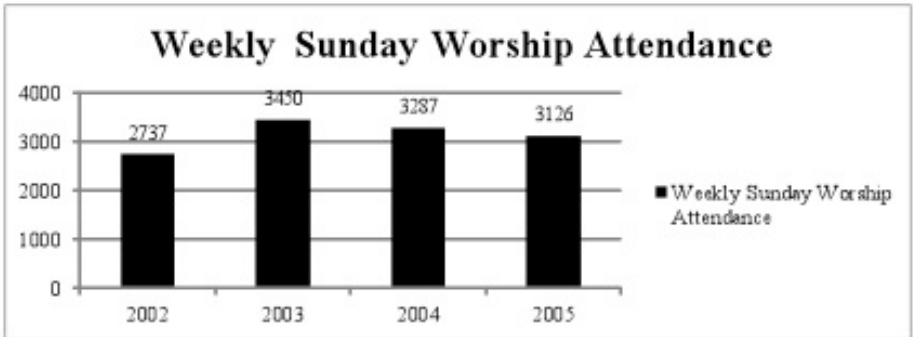
Table #2

The Impact of a Purity Ministry on a Large Suburban Church²¹

	Ave. Weekly Church Attendance	Ave. Weekly Giving	Pastoral Counseling Appointments	Men from Host Church Attending Purity Ministry for First Time	Churches Partnering with Host Church
2002	2737	\$87,547	237	250 (300)	7
2003	3450	\$86,987	197	575 (901)	143*
2004	3287	\$92,561	184	320 (750)	111*
2005	3126	\$93,555	172	211 (695)	87

*includes Minnesota Teen Challenge men

Chart #1

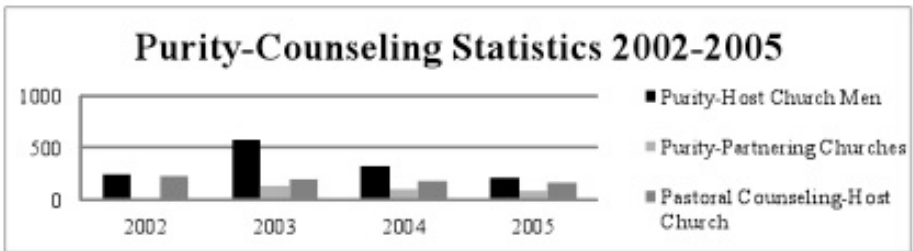


21 Annual church reports and the author’s personal files for years 2002-2005, Crystal Evangelical Free Church, New Hope, MN

Chart #2



Chart #3



It is evident from the table and three charts that something happened between 2002 and 2005 that resulted in increased attendance and giving and decreased counseling. Weekly worship attendance increased by 26% from 2002 to 2003 and remained above the 3000 barrier. Weekly giving broke the \$90,000 barrier in 2004 and 2005. Counseling appointments decreased by 28% over the four years of the purity ministry.

To what should we attribute these positive changes? It is hard to account for all the variables that could produce changes like these. It is possible that increased attendance and giving might be attributed to population growth in the communities surrounding the church. It could be that healthier people began attending the church in those years, thus reducing the need for pastoral counseling. It could be that existing ministries in the church became more effective in reaching the congregation and the community. The increased attendance and giving could come from transfer growth with people changing churches. Perhaps even reproductive growth with many new babies being born could be a factor. None of these variables, however, stand out as significant possibilities. In those years the one obvious variable that cannot be discounted or dismissed is the impact of the men's purity ministry, *Every Man's Battle For Purity*—the most significant variable during 2002-2005. The church is a good example of a congregation that experienced profound and deep change in her culture during the years

that sexual purity was a focus. There are other examples of changes that occurred at the host church that could also be a result of the purity ministry.

A vitalized men's ministry.

The men's ministry at the host church began in earnest during the years 1993-1998. These years correlated to the years when Promise Keepers was at its height and drawing hundreds of thousands of men nationwide to its stadium events (see table #3). The Holy Spirit greatly used Promise Keepers to tap into a felt need men had to connect with other men and the Lord in a way the church had never seen. In 1995 the stadium event at the Minneapolis Metrodome sold out 55,000 tickets in less than one week! At the host church the result was fleets of buses transporting hundreds of men to Promise Keepers events each year for four consecutive years.

Men returned from these events excited and looking to the church for continued spiritual growth. Few churches were prepared for the tidal wave of excited, motivated men. As leaders in our church, we quickly mobilized to launch a weekly Bible study for men on Monday evenings, using a large group lecture/small group discussion format. This reached an average of 80-100 men each week, a fraction of the number who had attended the Promise Keeper events. Promise Keepers reached its zenith in 1997, and then the ministry began to wane in 1999, moving to smaller, more regional venues (see chart #4).

As Promise Keepers waned, so did the men's ministry at our church. Men stopped attending the weekly Bible study. Many still remained in small groups studying *The Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper* and other men's books, but the ministry was a hollow shell of what it had been. Promise Keepers "caught lightning in a bottle" for a few short years.

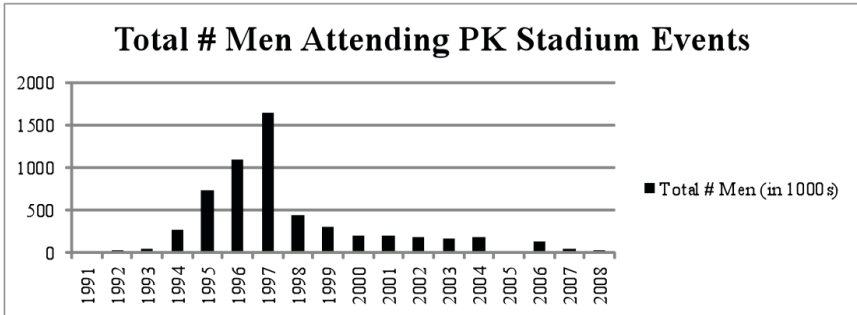
Aside from the occasional men's breakfast or retreat, ministry to men was minimal from 1999-2001. On October 5, 2002, however, something happened to men at the host church. On that date the men's purity ministry, Every Man's Battle For Purity, was launched. With the support and leadership of the board of elders and the senior pastor behind it, 300 men came together to take a stand for sexual purity in their lives. The Lord met these courageous men in a powerful way. Of the 300 men who attended The Battle, 250 men came forward at the invitation to plant white purity flags and commit their lives to walking in purity. Arising at 5:00 a.m., 145 men attended the 6:00 a.m. Purity Boot Camp each morning of the week following The Battle. One hundred twenty men enlisted in eight Purity Platoons led by pastors and men's ministry leaders. The post-Promise Keepers men's ministry was reborn.

Table #3
Promise Keepers Conference Attendance²²
1991-2008

Year	Number of stadium events	Total number of men attending
1991	1 (Boulder, CO)	4200
1992	1 (Boulder, CO)	22,000
1993	1 (Boulder, CO)	50,000
1994	6	278,000
1995	13	738,000
1996	22	1,100,000
1997	19 & 1 (Washington, D.C.)	1,639,000
1998	19	450,000
1999	15	306,700
2000	16	195,000
2001	18	194,000
2002	16	176,000
2003	16	172,000
2004	18	179,000
2005	20	?
2006	18	132,000
2007	7	50,000
2008	7	25,000

²² *History of Promise Keepers* (Retrieved July 15, 2009, from Promise Keepers: <http://www.promisekeepers.org/about/pkhistory>, 2008).

Chart #4



During the time that the purity ministry was a priority, men’s ministry flourished at the host church. As most pastors will attest, men’s ministry is one of the most difficult ministries in the church to develop and sustain. Too many Christian men in our culture are spiritually passive and not growing. For others the cost of discipleship is too high and the allure of the world too attractive. There is no transcendent cause that they feel passionate about and to which they can give themselves. They see no cause eternal in nature or for which they are willing to die.

After years of trying, many congregations and denominations have simply given up on men’s ministry. For other congregations, men’s ministry means shallow commitment with perhaps a monthly breakfast and an annual retreat. Even the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) has discontinued funding their national men’s ministry, Men With A Purpose, believing that a national men’s ministry is no longer “mission critical” for their denomination. The EFCA is not alone. In a

search of the websites of numerous evangelical denominations (Converge Worldwide/Baptist General Conference, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Reformed Church in America), all had national ministries for children, youth, and women but no ministry for men. Only the Assemblies of God website listed men's ministry among the many offered. What does that say? If nothing else, it tells us that ministry to men is difficult, and in a cost-benefit analysis isn't perceived to be worth the cost.

When the purity ministry was implemented at our church, men's ministry flourished. In pursuing the purity and holiness of God, men found a *cause célèbre*, a transcendent cause. They set aside their inhibitions and came to The Battle in droves. Most continued on through Purity Boot Camp and Purity Platoon. The result was a revitalized men's ministry.

Men aspired to leadership positions.

Besides a vitalized men's ministry, once men began to walk in purity, they began volunteering to serve in various ministries and the overall leadership of the church. At the host church in 2003, eight of the twelve elders leading the church had gone through at least one stage of the purity ministry. Prior to the purity ministry, most did not consider themselves qualified to lead the church as an elder.

Giving and worship attendance increased.

Freedom from sexual sin invariably produces freedom in other

areas of a man's life. This was reflected in two key areas: giving and worship. Men are now free to give and worship from the heart. At the host church, giving increased (see chart #2) by 7% from 2002 to 2005. Worship attendance increased 26% from 2002 to 2003. Why? I believe it was because men who are walking in sexual purity feel free to invite others to join them in worship. What better place to do that than in the church that helped them find this freedom?

Pastoral counseling decreased.

It was my privilege to serve as the primary pastoral counselor for the host church during the years 2002-2005. Although assessment and referral counseling was offered through Care Ministries, parishioners desiring counseling from a pastor usually came to see me. As the pastor of family and community ministries and with a background in marriage and family counseling, this was a good and natural fit. Pastoral counseling was conducted two days per week; parishioners were afforded a maximum of three free counseling sessions. Counseling took the form of solution-focused, brief therapy.

The typical pastoral counseling load averaged between 225-250 counseling appointments per year for the first eight years I served in pastoral counseling. From 2002-2005 my pastoral counseling load dropped by 28% from 237 to 172. What caused the drop? Was the new population coming to the church emotionally healthier and thus in less need of counseling? Were people less inclined to come to a pastor for

counseling in 2005 than they had been in 2002? Were people more willing to work on their problems without the help of a third party? Perhaps people began to identify me with the sexual purity ministry and stigmatization occurred, resulting in clients becoming more reticent to counsel with me. I don't have a solid answer, but I suspect that the impact of a sexually pure man on his marriage and family played a part. My theory is that as men became more sexually pure they began to direct their affections and attention toward their wives instead of toward false substitutes such as pornography or masturbation. That produced more satisfying marriages for both parties.²³ As marriages became more satisfying the need for pastoral counseling decreased.

Churches from different denominations cooperated.

In 2003 when the host church offered the purity ministry to the surrounding community, men from 143 churches and 46 different denominations enlisted in The Battle. The cause of purity crossed denominational and doctrinal barriers and brought Christians together. Churches from 15 different denominations hosted Purity Boot Camps and churches from 21 different denominations hosted Purity Platoons. Under the banner of purifying the Bride of Christ, these churches cooperated together. They understood that purity of the church is critical if she is to be corporately healthy and a witness to the world.

I am persuaded that the unity which occurred came as a result of

23 I. Woolf. Participant and Marital Change Resulting From a Church-Based Men's Purity Ministry (Denver, CO: Denver Seminary, 2006), p. 190-192.

the common cause of purity. Purity produced a foretaste of the corporate unity for which Jesus prayed in John 17. Could God use purity as the trigger for both unity and revival in the church locally and nationally? I believe it can happen on a broader scale.

The Cost to Become a Pure Church

If purity is the path to unity, why isn't the church pursuing purity with all her heart? There is a cost to becoming pure as a church. Satan has used sexual temptation and sexual sin against the church for millennia. For the church to become pure, she must contend with his schemes. Even though the church was purchased by the blood of Christ and belongs to Him, Satan will not give up any ground he has taken without a fight. The church that desires purity will encounter spiritual warfare at a level they have never before known.

Besides spiritual warfare, purity will cost the church because of her lack of honesty. Too many of God's people are living double lives, having a public life that looks spiritual, but a private life that is secretive and sinful. To use Jesus' words to the Pharisees, "In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (Matt. 23:28). Pure churches know they are sinners who are saved by the grace of God alone. They cling to the cross of Christ knowing they have no merit of their own; they don't try to pretend they do. Pastor Alan Kraft observes,

Change happens best in an environment of authenticity

and mercy—but we must be intentional about creating this atmosphere in our churches. When our teaching about holiness is filled with lots of to-dos and little mercy, we convey an underlying message: *Don't tell anyone about your struggle. Don't admit your weakness.* This message only drives the sin deeper.²⁴

There is also the cost of the status quo. Purity will rock the boat, shake up the status quo, and make the congregation uncomfortable. Sex is a sensitive and often taboo subject and some will object to talking about it. They will use phrases such as, “We shouldn’t hang our dirty laundry in public,” and “Sex is a private matter between a husband and wife.” Leadership must be prepared for this kind of reaction. It is because the church has not talked about sex publicly that it has become a problem.

The Power of a Pure Church to Worship and Fellowship

When a church begins to address the issue of sexual purity, we should expect the Lord to bless it. After all, He is the Holy One of Israel and He has commanded us to be holy as He is holy (1 Pet. 1:16). He tells us that when we obey His commands, we show that we love Him. He will in turn bless us with His presence (Jn. 14:21). What does His blessing upon a congregation look like? It takes the form of the Holy

²⁴ Alan Kraft, *Sexual Sin Among Us: Asking the Right Questions* (EFCA Today, 83, 2, summer 2009), p. 14.

Spirit igniting the congregation with power for worship, service, prayer, giving, and fellowship.

The power to worship.

An expression worn on the tee-shirts of men in the choir at Promise Keeper's conferences was, "Real Men Sing Real Loud." It's true. Men who are unfettered by sexual sin enter into worship with enthusiastic singing. Their excitement in worshipping God is contagious as men hear other men singing unrestrained. Nothing thrills the hearts of wives more than when their husbands begin to worship. Soon the corporate worship of the congregation is elevated to a new level.

More than singing, pure men begin to listen more attentively to the message of the pastor. When he preaches they listen to hear what the Lord has to say to them. Some take notes on the pastor's sermon; others use his message as a springboard for teaching their wives and children.

As men become worshipers, giving increases. Jesus becomes Lord of their money and they begin to tithe. The financial needs of the church begin to be met and the church is able to focus on missions overseas and stateside.

Besides giving, men's prayer lives change. Men begin to pray for others instead of their self-centered prayers of the past. They recognize that only the Lord can change hearts and intervene in lives.

The power to fellowship.

Finally, fellowship becomes a priority to pure men. They can't

wait to get to church on Sundays and they delight to serve alongside fellow believers. Listen to the priority fellowship played in the church in Jerusalem:

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts....All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. . . There were no needy persons among them... (Acts 2:44-46, 4:32-34a).

A Biblical Example of a Pure Congregation

Signs of Church Health

How do we know if a church is healthy? Does the absence of problems indicate health? No, healthy churches have problems just like unhealthy ones do. The difference is in how healthy churches deal with those problems. Healthy churches follow biblical principles and deal with their problems in godly, biblical ways. Does size alone indicate health? No. Size is also no indication of functionality, as large congregations can be just as dysfunctional and sick as small congregations.

The Bible presents a model of what a healthy church looks like when it describes the Jerusalem church of the first century. The

Jerusalem church was not a perfect church or a church without problems. They encountered issues such as persecution from without (Acts 5:40, 8:1), lying and deception from within (Acts 5:1-11), and inequities in the distribution of food (Acts 6:1). In each situation, they handled these problems through prayer, making wise decisions, and following biblical principles. They are a great example of a healthy church.

Notice that all the signs of church health were displayed in abundance in the Jerusalem Church: powerful prayer, Spirit-anointed teaching, communion, and fellowship (Acts 2:42). In addition this church practiced sacrificial giving such that they had no poor among them. They cared for their own (Acts 2:45, 4:34). Their prayers were powerful (Acts 2:42, 4:31, 12:5). They clung to the teaching of their pastors/apostles (Acts 2:42). They delighted in times of corporate worship and communion (Acts 2:46, 5:12). They enjoyed one another's presence and loved to eat meals together (Acts 2:46).

God Blesses the Pure Church

How did God bless this church? He blessed her in four ways: (a) by adding to her number (Acts 2:47, 5:14), (b) by giving her unity (Acts 4:32), (c) by purifying her (Acts 5:1-11), and (d) by scattering her through persecution (Acts 8:1).

The blessing of church growth.

Growth through faith decisions for Jesus Christ is clearly a blessing from God. When God knows that He can trust a church and her

shepherds with new lambs, He adds to her number. A reasoned guess is that the Jerusalem church grew to be in excess of 20,000.²⁵ Will God bless your church with numerical growth as He did the Jerusalem church? God controls the growth of His church and only He knows the answer to that question.

The blessing of unity.

All the saints of the Jerusalem church were “one in heart and mind” (Acts 4:32). That expression is synonymous with the Apostle Paul’s exhortation to the Philippian believers in Philippians 2:2. Paul exhorted them to be “likeminded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.” The essence of unity is to be one in heart and mind, likeminded and likehearted. The Lord blessed the church in Jerusalem with unity.

It is easy to see how growth and unity are blessings, but how are purification and persecution blessings?

The backdoor blessing of purification.

God purifies His church through discipline, and therefore discipline is a blessing (Heb. 12:5-11). Whether done by God or by her leaders, discipline purifies the church. When God sees that a church has become defiled and impure, He loves her too much to permit her to continue in her sin unabated. Such was the situation in Acts 5:1-11

25 Duncan Heaster, Digression #10: The Size of the Early Church (n.d.), Retrieved July 22, 2009, from Carelinks Ministries: http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/james_d10.html.

with Ananias and his wife Sapphira. This couple conspired to lie to the church in Jerusalem about the amount they were paid for the land they sold. Peter told them, “You have not lied to men but to God” (Acts 5:4). The sinning couple was struck dead by the Lord and buried by the church. Church discipline is never pleasant. Yet discipline is a “backdoor blessing” because it addresses those things that hinder growth, as well as purifies the congregation (cf. Jn. 15:6). The results of this backdoor blessing for the church in Jerusalem were threefold: (a) high regard for the leaders (Acts 5:13), (b) explosive numerical growth (Acts 5:14), and (c) validation of the gospel message through miraculous healings (Acts 5:15, 16).

May God give churches the courage to practice church discipline. It yields the same three blessings of a high regard for leadership, numerical growth, and validation of the gospel message now as it did in the early church.

The backdoor blessing of persecution.

Persecution is another backdoor blessing. It is a refiner, a sifter. Persecution separates the wheat from the chaff and weeds out apostates and the uncommitted. How is it a blessing? First, it causes the gospel to increase. Persecution scatters the saved so that the gospel might spread, the Great Commission be fulfilled, and many more might be saved (Acts 8:1, 4). Secondly, it solidifies the saved in their faith and produces zeal within them to spread the gospel. Persecution did not cause the early

church to shrink; rather it caused the Word of God to spread and the church to grow even more (Acts 9:31, 12:24, 13:49, 19:20).

The Corporate Witness of a Pure Church to the Community

God gives the pure church favor with the community, as witnessed by the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:47, 5:15, 16). When a church is walking in purity, she becomes a powerful witness to her community. The community sees that Christians are distinctly different in their lifestyles and values from the unsaved world. When believers are walking in purity, the corporate witness of the church becomes believable; her actions support her words. That is attractive to the unsaved. When the pure church is involved with the community through service projects, the community becomes open to her gospel witness.

Conclusion

Is unity possible? I believe it is! God promises to bless the church that is pure, and He can use the cause of purity to produce unity in the church. What does a purity ministry look like in a local church? Proposed models for both a men's and women's purity ministry are presented in Appendices L and M.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POWER OF A

PURE PASTOR

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:2, 3

Shepherds Lead the Way

We live in a sex-saturated, alluring culture. Consider pornography, for example. With the rise of Internet pornography, \$97.06 billion was spent worldwide on porn alone in 2006.²⁶ Thirty-three to forty percent of all pastors are ensnared in sexual sin on some level (porn viewing, masturbation, prostitution, affairs, voyeurism, homosexuality, etc.).²⁷ This is unacceptable. If the shepherds are not pure, how can the flock be? If the shepherds are leading from a position of moral weakness, how can the flock not also be morally weak? Flocks rise no higher than their shepherds. As Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him” (Jn. 13:16). As a servant is never greater than his master, so flocks are

26 Internet Filter Review, Internet pornography statistics, Retrieved August 11, 2007, from <http://www.internetfilterreview.com/internet-pornography-statistics.html>.

27 Mark Laaser, The Battle, January 17, 2009.

never greater than their shepherds who lead them.

The Challenge of Serving as a Pastor

The Vulnerability of the Shepherds

We expect pastors to be above sexual sin. We know pastors are sinners, but we expect that if anybody should be immune to sexual immorality it should be pastors. After all, don't pastors study the Word of God and pray every day? Don't they worship the Lord and walk in a close relationship with Him—and therefore are they not impervious to the types of temptations that beset the laity? Evidently not. We set pastors on pedestals and minimize their humanity. But they are sinners just like us, complete with all the warts and blemishes of fallen man. What is true of all men is true of pastors. The Apostle Paul put it this way, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Cor. 10:13). Pastors are not above temptation.

Why are pastors vulnerable to sexual temptation? What makes them so susceptible to this particular sin? Here are 11 reasons that make pastors vulnerable to sexual sin:

Personal issues of the pastor:

1. *Isolation and time alone.* Pastors, especially those serving in rural or small town parishes, are vulnerable because they are isolated and alone. They often have little

fellowship with others and may feel “chained to their desks” preparing sermons, Bible studies, worship celebrations, praying, or administering the church. Even pastors in a large church with multiple staff pastors can isolate. Aloneness is not good for anyone, but especially men. God knows that. He declared Adam’s aloneness, “not good” and created Eve to remedy it (Gen. 2:18). Wives are God’s gift to men to allay their aloneness (1 Cor. 7:7).

In *The Power of Purity*, I cited the six most common triggers for sexual sin: (a) hurt, (b) anger, (c) loneliness, (d) tiredness, (e) boredom, and (f) curiosity.²⁸ Loneliness is a strategic trigger. In times of aloneness, the devil tempts pastors to search for companionship. Too many go online and find the false intimacy of pornography.

2. *Triple “A” engine of the Internet—affordability, accessibility, anonymity.* As the late Alvin Cooper (who coined the term *triple “A” engine*) says, there are three central components that combine to turbocharge—that is, accelerate and intensify—online sexual activity. Those three components include access, affordability, and anonymity.²⁹

28 I. Woolf, *The Power of Purity: God’s Design for Sex in a Sex-Saturated World* (Osseo, MN: Hopewell Publishing, 2009), p. 68.

29 Alvin Cooper (Ed.), *Sex and the Internet: A Guide Book for Clinicians* (New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge, 2002), pp. 5, 6.

The Internet is available and easily accessed via computer at home, school, or office. With the advent of laptop computers, and handheld personal digital assistants (PDAs), the Internet is accessible 24 hours per day, seven days per week from virtually anywhere in the world. This accessibility has made sex the most commonly searched topic on the Internet. In addition there are Internet websites tailored to virtually any sexual proclivity. As Cooper says, “People can find a website to satisfy any sexual need or desire they may have without the need to delay gratification.”³⁰

Pastors are usually computer savvy. They use the computer for word processing and database collection. They send and receive e-mails and do online research for sermons and Bible studies on the Internet. With a stroke of a key, a pastor can access some of the most lewd and degrading websites imaginable.

The Internet is affordable. For a few dollars per month Internet service providers will connect anyone to the Internet world. With millions of websites and products, the law of supply and demand comes into play. Like any marketplace, competition on the Internet contains costs and makes it affordable. With minimal overhead, items sold on the Internet are considerably less expensive than those sold in “brick

30 Ibid, p. 6.

and mortar” stores. In turn, costs are less to the consumer. This is true for pornography and other sexual websites. Many lure in the public by providing free access to their wares.³¹ The temptation to pastors to access free pornography sites in the privacy of their offices or homes is enormous.

The final “A” of the engine is anonymity. The Internet appears to be anonymous. This façade of anonymity is powerful. Pastors will access pornographic website believing that their identities are safe and they’ll never be discovered. As Cooper says, “Those who might be hesitant to purchase sexually explicit materials, products, or aids in a face-to-face encounter feel more comfortable doing so when protected by the anonymity they feel online.”³²

Is the Internet truly anonymous? No. Despite a pastor’s best efforts at cleansing his computer, every website he has ever accessed is recorded on the computer’s hard drive and is retrievable by a computer technician. This is why the purity ministry requires men with defiled computers to install new hard drives that are clean and free from pornography.

31 Ibid, p. 6.

32 Ibid., p. 6.

3. *Rationalized dualism.* Dualism is leading a double life. It is acting one way in public and another way in private. It is nothing short of hypocrisy. Rationalized dualism is convincing oneself that a double life is justified and even deserved. Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, defines rationalism as “any view appealing to reason as a source of knowledge or justification.”³³ Pastors can adopt a sense of personal entitlement. They rationalize their sexual sin with thoughts such as, “I’ve worked so hard; no one understands how hard I work. I deserve some pleasure. If only my wife were more available.” This thinking allows them to justify their sexual sin.

No one was harder on hypocrites than Jesus Christ. He called the Pharisees hypocrites, fools, and blind guides. He said, “In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness” (Matt. 23:28). The guilt and shame felt by the pastor practicing rationalized dualism is immense. To stand before his congregation and preach one thing while living another is crippling to his soul.

4. *Lying and deception.* In order to avoid discovery and the shame of this sin, many pastors will lie. They fear

33 Rationalism, In Wikipedia (Retrieved July 23, 2009, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationalism>, 2008).

the many losses that will result as consequences of their sin. Some of the most common losses are the loss of their ministry, loss of their income, loss of their standing with the denomination, loss of their marriage and family, and loss of their reputation within the church and the community. To avoid these losses, pastors will lie or deceive. They will lie to their staff, their spouses, their children, their boards, their denominational superintendents, and even themselves. They will shift the blame for their sexual sin onto others in an attempt to avoid punishment. Sir Walter Scott wrote, “Oh what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.” Liars need great memories to keep their stories straight with everyone. It is a tangled web indeed.

5. *Personal and marital stress.* Pastors are under stress. With few exceptions they are overworked and underpaid. The expectations and demands of the congregation are great. Often the pastor is under a self-imposed pressure as he strives to achieve a standard for the ministry. He has set the bar high and he drives himself and others to attain it. It is not unusual for driven pastors to work 60-70 hours per week.

For many pastors, the stress lands on their marriages. Wives

of pastors are sometimes looked upon as “the pastor to women” or the model for women in the church. This pressure to live up to the expectations of the flock can impact the pastor’s marriage. Combine these expectations with insufficient income and the congregational demands on her husband—and it’s easy to see why most women did not bargain for being a pastor’s wife. As one pastor’s wife said to me, “I married *him*, not the congregation!”

When the combination of personal, family, and congregational demands overwhelm a pastor, it is not unusual for him to seek solace in sexual sin. He medicates himself through using pornography or seeking out a prostitute or entering into an affair. His mood is temporarily elevated and the stress and cares of life disappear . . . for a while. Then reality comes crashing in with all its accompanying guilt, shame, and despair.

Relational issues of the pastor:

6. *Lack of accountability and intimate relationships.* Few pastors are truly accountable to someone who will ask them the hard questions and, when necessary, wound them (cf. Prov. 27:6). It is difficult for a wife to hold her husband accountable and be his accountability partner. Her role is to be his wife, not his “purity police.” It is equally as hard for a staff pastor to hold a senior pastor accountable. The power differential between the pastors, as well as the dual relationship, make

it nearly impossible. It may not work effectively to have a member of the elder board or a lay leader from the congregation hold the pastor accountable. Again there is a dual relationship, plus most laymen hold the senior pastor in such high regard that it is tough for them to ask him the intrusive questions needed for true accountability. It is hard to be honest with someone who has authority over you, “watches over you as one who must give an account,” and to whom you are to render obedience (Heb. 13:17).

Who then can a pastor approach to hold him accountable?

Perhaps a possible accountability partner is a fellow pastor in another church in the community. This eliminates both the power differential and the dual relationship.

Without accountability, pastors can easily succumb to pride and an attitude of superiority. They can begin to believe that they can sin with impunity. Accountability requires humility—the humility to say, “I need someone in my life who can help me see my blind spots and serve as a guardrail to keep me on the path of righteousness.”

Besides the lack of accountability, too many pastors do not have true intimacy with their wives, God, or anyone. They will not let anyone inside; no one sees their true selves. They fear such vulnerability will leave them exposed to hurt, ridicule, or rejection. “If you really knew me, you wouldn’t like me; you’d reject me” is the thinking. All relationships are kept at arm’s length, shallow, and surface level. But the problem with

this lack of intimacy is that humans are designed by God for intimate relationships (Gen. 2:18). The lack of intimate relationships does not diminish the deep desire for intimacy.

How do many pastors handle the disparity and internal conflict? *Sexual immorality.* Pornography, prostitutes, affairs, masturbation all provide false substitutes for true intimacy. Satan deceives pastors into believing that their legitimate need for intimacy can be met through these false substitutes—and false intimacy is the result. As Harry Schaumberg puts it, “In effect, a sex addict creates a pseudo relationship with something or someone who can be controlled, such as a picture, an actor on the video screen, or a prostitute.”³⁴

Church and denominational issues.

7. *No church policy or computer safeguards.* Many churches do their pastors no favors in the area of sexuality. They have no policies regarding sexuality: in counseling, computer usage, youth ministry, or staff-congregational relationships. Some think they do not need such policies because their pastors are impervious to sexual sin being such holy men of God. That is naïve at best and dangerous at worst. All men, including pastors, are sinners and susceptible to being tempted by the devil. The appendices of this book provide a number of church policies that pastors and elder boards can adapt to fit their needs.

34 Harry Schaumberg, *False Intimacy: Understanding the Struggle of Sexual Addiction* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997), p. 20.

There is also a need for churches to help their pastors by installing preventative software on all church computers and regularly monitoring them. Preventative software should include a firewall on the server and accountability software on home and office computers, PDAs, and cell phones.

8. No denominational policy on sexual purity and no plan for prevention, restoration, or termination. All denominations have policies on pastoral discipline. They encounter pastors in their churches committing a variety of sins from embezzlement to adultery. They have a plan for dealing with sinning pastors. However, few denominations have a plan for helping pastors in their churches maintain sexual purity. There is no focused training on sexual purity provided on a denominational level. Few denominations screen new pastors or seminary students entering the ministry for sexual addiction. Few provide confidential assessment and referral service for pastors who may be struggling with sexual sin and need help.

In addition to the lack of screening, few denominations have a plan for prevention, restoration, or termination of pastors who sexually sin. Routinely pastors have their credentials pulled or are dismissed from the ministry for sexual sins that are preventable and for which restoration is possible. Pastors are routinely fired by their churches for viewing pornography, something that can be overcome. A denominational plan for helping churches restore pastors is detailed in the next chapter. There

are sexual sins so damaging that a pastor needs to be terminated by his congregation and have his credentials pulled by his denomination. But even with those devastating sins, a denomination needs a well-conceived, written policy that is communicated to every church and pastor in every district.

9. Minimization or rationalization of the problem by leadership. Rather than “make waves,” the church board may choose to minimize a pastor’s sexual sin in the hope that it will disappear. Sexual sins never disappear. They invariably resurface when the pastor re-offends. Silence in the face of sexual sin is not golden; it is cowardice. To attempt to make something small that is large (the definition of minimization) is a psychological defense mechanism.

Why do boards or leaders minimize problems? Some fear the consequences of facing them. Some fear possible legal repercussions. Some fear harming the reputation of the sinning pastor or the church. So they say things like, “It’s no big deal. Let’s not make a mountain out of a molehill.” Sometimes they rationalize the sexual sin of the pastor by saying, “He’s too important to our congregation. We can’t discipline him, we might lose him. If his wife was doing her job and meeting his needs, this wouldn’t have happened.”

By way of illustration, consider the case of a board that chose to rationalize the sin of their pastor. While vacationing in Florida, my wife and I attended worship services at a dynamic church. The 40-something

pastor preached a powerful message and his wife led the choir. At the invitation at the close of the service, parishioners came to the front in droves for prayer. As we left, I remarked to our hosts what a wonderful service it had been and what a dynamic team the pastor and his wife made. Our hosts informed us that it was common knowledge in the community that the pastor had fallen in love with an 18-year-old young woman he had been counseling. The pastor and his wife were currently separated until the situation could be resolved. I asked why the board had not asked him to step out of the pulpit. Our hosts replied that when the situation came to light, the board replied that the Lord was blessing his preaching in spite of him. They refused to ask him to step down for fear of harming the church's ministry.

Denominational leaders are equally as capable of minimizing or rationalizing the sexual sins of pastors. Consider how the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy has handled pedophilia by its priests. Priests who abused altar boys or pre-teens were not removed from the priesthood, but simply moved to a different parish. To make matters worse, the church attempted to cover up the incidents. The sin was finally exposed, a scandal resulted, and the church has been forced to pay in excess of one billion dollars to the victims of such abuse.³⁵

10. *No accessibility to resources.* Many rural or small town churches have limited resources for pastors who are struggling with

35 Catholic sex abuse cases, In Wikipedia (Retrieved July 27, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_sex_abuse_cases, 2009).

sexual sin. They may not have access to counseling for sexual sin or addiction. They may feel isolated and have no other pastor or trusted leader with whom they can share their problems. Because of isolation and loneliness, they are vulnerable to sexual sin.

11. *Not competent to counsel.* Finally, too many pastors have inadequate training in counseling. They may have had one or two general courses in a Master of Divinity program, but are woefully unprepared for the kind of problems they face in pastoral counseling. As a result, many do not know their limits. Instead of referring to a counselor, they attempt to provide counseling beyond their competency. They may lack training in boundaries in general and, specifically, boundaries in counseling the opposite gender. They do not understand the power differential between pastors and parishioners. Many do not understand the liability issues surrounding pastoral counseling. They may not understand their roles as mandated reporters who are required by their states to report certain offenses to state or county authorities.

Counseling is a dual-edged sword. It can be a great blessing in helping pastors and parishioners to connect on a deep level as they work through personal, marriage, and family problems. It can also consume much of the pastor's time. Pastors are wise to train laymen and women to take over much of the counseling. That is especially important with opposite gender counseling. It is wise for a female to counsel another female. For those who violate this principle, the counseling setting can be

perilous. It has been the downfall of many pastors. The intimacy of the counseling setting has led some to compromise their moral values.

The Costs to Becoming a Pure Pastor

As with anything worthwhile, there is a cost involved in becoming a pure pastor.

Humility of the pastor.

The cost to a pastor starts with his ego. He cannot afford to be aloof or isolated from others. Pure pastors cannot have an attitude of superiority that thinks, “I am above this. Rules apply to others but not to me. I’m superior and not like other men.” That kind of attitude has led to the downfall of many of God’s best leaders. The cost of becoming pure will involve a pastor humbling himself in his attitude.

Assuming accountability.

The pastor will have to make himself accountable to another for his thoughts, words, and actions. He will also need to install accountability software and filters on his home and office computers. Software and filters are to the Internet what plexiglass walls are to a lion cage. These walls separate visitors at the zoo from the lions. They allow one to safely walk through the zoo without being eaten by the residents. Software and filters allow pure pastors to walk through the Internet without being devoured by the “roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8). Accountability software will report to the pastor’s accountability partner every website visited by the pastor on the Internet. That in itself is

humbling—and it is even more humbling to have to answer for one’s actions. The cost of purity is accountability.

Trust of others.

Many pastors do not trust anyone. They don’t trust their boards, their wives, their denominational leaders, their district superintendents, other men or women, themselves—or even God. They live guarded lives that always keep others at arm’s length and never “let them in.” Why? They have been hurt in the past. Others have failed them, let them down, or not lived up to their expectations. Their trust has been betrayed and many have consciously or subconsciously vowed never to trust anyone again.

The pastor who wants to become pure has to learn to trust others. That is not easy for one who has been hurt in the past, but there is no intimacy without trust. The same pastors who cannot trust anyone are also starved for true intimacy. How does someone learn to trust? It is a slow process of opening oneself up by faith to others and taking the risk of being hurt. It is stepping out onto one plank of the relationship bridge and finding out that it will support you—and then by faith stepping onto another and another. Trusting others takes faith, but there is no other way.

In-depth relationships with men.

Because many pastors do not trust others, they have few in-depth relationships with men. Their conversations with men seldom go deeper than the traditional news, weather, and sports reports. The pastor who

desires to become pure needs to have a few genuine friends in his life—and more than just a plethora of acquaintances. Genuine friends “know all about you and love you anyway.” They are those with whom a pastor can share his struggles, his fears, his dreams, and aspirations. Friends like these are the ones he seeks for counsel when he has tough decisions to make. They are the ones who “hold the ropes” for him in prayer as he preaches, travels, or goes into challenging situations. They are unafraid to confront him with the truth and when necessary will do “spiritual surgery” on his soul (Prov. 27:6).

No moral dualism.

The pastor who would be pure cannot practice moral dualism—saying and acting one way in private but a different way in public. That is simply hypocrisy. The pastor’s wife and children see it and it undermines his integrity in their eyes. To be pure his life must be the same in private as it is in public. He must practice moral monism (oneness).

The Six Responsibilities of a Pure Pastor

As described in *The Power of Purity*, the six responsibilities of a man come from Jesus’ High Priestly prayer in John 17 and from Paul’s instruction to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5.³⁶ Pastors bear the same six responsibilities toward their flock as every man does toward his family. Regardless of culture or era, these same six responsibilities apply to all men and all pastors.

36 I. Woolf, *The Power of Purity: God’s Design for Sex in a Sex-Saturated World* (Osseo, MN: Hopewell Publishing, 2009), pp. 102-119.

The Responsibility to Provide for the Flock

The first responsibility (not necessarily the most important) is to feed the flock. Jesus told Peter, “Feed my sheep” (Jn. 21:17). When it comes to feeding the flock, nothing compares to the faithful proclamation of the Word of God. The “bully pulpit” can be an effective tool for the pastor to preach against sin and the moral evils of the day. The flock longs for the proclamation of the Bible like a baby longs for milk (1 Cor. 3:2, Heb. 5:12, 13). The Apostle Peter puts it this way, “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. . .” (1 Pet. 2:2). As the saying goes, “You are what you eat.” Pastors who faithfully feed their flocks the Word of God will produce flocks with appetites for spiritual meat because they know the Bible. They will become like the noble Bereans who “. . . examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true” (Acts 17:11).

There is power in the written, taught, believed, lived, and proclaimed Word of God—*God’s power*. God promises to bless and honor His Word (Is. 55:10, 11). God will even bless His Word in spite of the condition of the messenger. Jonah is a good example of this truth. The prophet reluctantly preached the Word to the heathen city of Nineveh and, though his heart was not right with God, God still honored His Word. The Ninevites repented and God spared the city from destruction. “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had

threatened” (Jonah 3:10).

Pastors who live double lives still proclaim the Word of God to their flocks. God’s Word still goes forth with power and lives are changed by it. But the personal blessing of God upon the lives of the shepherds is absent. God cannot bless His child who willfully sins. “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God” (1 Jn. 3:9). Rest assured, the Holy Spirit will do His job of convicting of sin (John 16:8-11). The pastor’s conscience will be smitten with guilt and shame. All of this is intended to drive him to the cross of Christ for mercy, forgiveness, and cleansing. Once cleansed, the pure pastor will need the support and accountability of a purity partner and a Purity Platoon.

The Responsibility to Protect the Flock

Protection does not come naturally to men in general. Most men tend to be self-protective, thus the concept of protecting others rather than self must be taught. Jesus prioritized protection by asking His Father to protect His flock (Jn. 17:15). If protection is important to the Chief Shepherd, it must be equally as important to His undershepherds (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

A pure pastor must protect the flock from outside attack. The flock is prone to parasites, which often take the form of heretical teachings and false prophets who will lead her astray. The pastor must be willing to confront false teaching whether it comes in written, oral, or

video form.

Paul warned the elders of the Ephesian church in his passionate plea:

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

Acts 20:28-31

He must also protect the flock from internal attack, which means he must protect her from herself. The flock is prone to become sick from overgrazing and wandering astray. The shepherd must guard the flock against the sins of the world. Parishioners can become greedy, worldly in their values, and self-centered. The shepherd must protect his charge by confronting these sins when he sees them in the flock.

The Responsibility to Lead the Flock

When it comes to leading the flock, the pastor has the authority of his position and his Lord (1 Thess. 5:12, 13). Though he has the authority God has invested in the position, the pastor is to lead not by power, but by example and by serving the flock (cf. Matt. 20:25, 26). As

Peter declares, “. . . not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:3). Leadership must lead by personal example. He cannot ask his flock to do what he will not do himself, whether that involves evangelism, giving, service, prayer, or purity. Like the Apostle Paul, the pastor must be able to say, “. . . I urge you to imitate me” (1 Cor. 4:16). He is the embodiment of servant leadership.

When a pastor is walking in purity, he has the power of personal example—and his flock knows it. They will follow that kind of leadership with willing hearts.

The Responsibility to Love the Flock

Love is the mark of the Christian (Jn. 13:35). Shepherds are to love the sheep and sacrifice for them. Love is a reciprocal relationship, in that pastors give their flocks time, energy, finances, and talents while the sheep in turn honor them with respect, submission, and wages (1 Thess. 5:12, 1 Tim 5:18). When a pastor is pure, he is able to love the flock. An impure pastor doesn't love the flock; he uses the flock to meet his own needs, whether those needs be for self-esteem, power, money, or fame. Like the unrighteous shepherds described in Jeremiah 23, impure pastors do not really love the flock or serve them. Quite the contrary, they *use* the flock and the flock *serves them*. Purity permits a pastor to move from using the flock to loving the flock.

The Responsibility to Sacrifice for the Flock

What does it mean to sacrifice? To sacrifice is “the act of offering” and is closely identified with the word for altar.³⁷ Figuratively it means to devote one’s life or blood, to spend oneself. The sacrifice of the leader for those in his charge is modeled after Jesus’ own sacrifice for His flock. As He said in John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” Purity permits a pastor to sacrifice himself for his congregation with the proper motives. He sacrifices himself as an example to his people, modeling Jesus to them. He leads them in sacrificing his time, money, food, talents, energy, and creativity. The congregation sees him doing this and follows his example. They become a sacrificing congregation.

Impure pastors have impure motives. They may sacrifice themselves, but invariably they do so from a selfish motive—what it will do for them. Some are like the hypocrites who sacrificed financially to be honored by men (Matt. 6:2). Some sacrifice time in prayer to be seen by men (Matt. 6:5). Some sacrifice food by fasting, but again to be seen by men (Matt. 6:16).

The Responsibility to Sanctify the Flock

To sanctify means “to set apart as holy, for holy purposes.” We derive words like “sanctification” and “saint” from sanctify. Just as a husband is to sanctify his wife (Eph. 5:26, 27), so a pastor is to sanctify

37 Θυσια (thusia), Arndt & Gingrich, p. 366, 367.

his flock. How does he do that? He sanctifies his flock through three powerful tools:

1. *Preaching*. The proclamation of the Word of God is powerful to sanctify. The Bible speaks to this sanctifying process as demonstrated by Christ:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25, 26

The pastor sanctifies the flock through the faithful proclamation of the Word of God, which has the power to cleanse and purify the souls of the congregation (Ps. 119:9, 11). The Holy Spirit uses the spoken Word of God to bring the souls of the saints under conviction (Heb. 4:12). Just as He convicts the world, the Spirit also convicts believers of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come (Jn. 16:8-10).

The Holy Spirit also uses the proclaimed Word to bring consolation to the flock. Many in the congregation are wounded and need the “balm of Gilead” to heal their souls. Only God’s Word can deliver that kind of healing. Psalm 119:28 says, “My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.”

2. *Private and public confession of sin.* To sanctify the flock, the pastor must encourage both private and public confession of sin. Confession purges the soul of its sin burden. James 5:16 says that private confession of sin is the path to healing. Evangelical churches have few vehicles for private confession of sin, yet the Bible clearly and specifically calls us to practice it.

There is also a place for public confession of sin. 1 John 1:9 says that if Christians confess their sins, the Lord is faithful and just and will forgive them and cleanse them. Public confession of sin can be illustrated from the nation of Israel and the first century church. For example, in response to Achan's sin of taking spoil that was "under the ban," Joshua exhorts Achan in front of all the tribes, clans, and families of Israel: "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give him the praise. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me" (Josh. 7:19). Achan publicly confesses his sin.

Confession of sin humbles our souls. It keeps us tenderhearted. When a pastor does not exhort and model public and private confession of sin, neither will the congregation. Soon pride begins to infiltrate the ranks; the pastor and people begin to believe the lie that they are good people who no longer sin (cf. Rom. 3:12, 1 Jn. 1:8, 10). Confession of sin is the preeminent mark of revival among God's people.

3. *Prayer.* Whether praying for the flock in his prayer closet or leading them in corporate prayer, the pastor who wants to sanctify his church will pray for them. God can do the impossible through the prayers of His shepherd. Prayer taps into that impossible-working power to sanctify the congregation. Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (Jn 17:17). If Jesus felt the burden to pray and ask His Father to sanctify His flock, so must His pastors today.

Conclusion

Serving God as a shepherd of His flock is a demanding calling. If God has called and gifted a pastor, He never revokes His calling (Rom. 11:29). Just as a shepherd is always a shepherd even if he has no flock, so a pastor is always a pastor with or without a congregation to serve. Once a pastor, always a pastor.

The power of a pure pastor cannot be underestimated. He leads the congregation—and they will rise no higher than him. The principle of reproduction, drawn from Genesis 1, declares that we reproduce after our own kind. The congregation will take its cues from their pastor and will become like him. If he is a man of prayer, so they will be. If he is an avid student of the Word, they will join him in studying. If he has a heart for the lost, they will love the lost as well. If he has a burden for world missions, they will likewise be burdened. Knowing the truth of that

principle, it is absolutely imperative that Christ's shepherds live and lead their flocks in purity. Only then can they present to Christ a pure church (2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:27).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROTECTION OF A PURE PASTOR

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

Proverbs 4:23

The Pastor Needs Protection

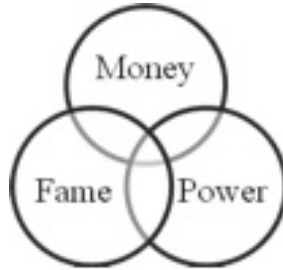
Why does the pastor need protection? Is he not strong enough physically, emotionally, and spiritually to withstand any attacks? Pastors are vulnerable, and Satan knows that if he can “strike the shepherd . . . the sheep will be scattered” (Mk. 14:27). If he can topple the pastor, he can scatter and demoralize the sheep. Thus pastors are under attack on numerous fronts and live as those with targets painted on their backs. How can pastors be protected from these attacks? This chapter focuses on the personal, marital, and ministry protection of the pastor.

The Personal Protection of the Pastor

The three most desired qualities in our world are money, power, and fame. The world runs hard after all three—and they appear to have a magnetic attraction to one another. Those who have money invariably have both fame and power, and so forth (see diagram #1).

Diagram #1

The Synergy of Money, Power, and Fame



Pastors need to be aware of this synergy because all pastors are in power positions within their churches. They possess power by virtue of their position and example. Some pastors will accumulate wealth or become famous, but all have power. Beware of power. There are many in the congregation who are attracted to it and to the one who possesses it.

Some who desire to be near the pastor because of his power are predators. They want to prey upon him and steal his power. Predators make take the form of those outside the flock who seek to exert authority over the pastor’s flock. That was Paul’s concern for the Ephesian church (Acts 20:29). He calls these predators “savage wolves” and says they will come into the flock from the outside and will devour them. Other predators come from within the flock. Paul addressed them as well when he spoke to the Ephesians (Acts 20:30). He said of these predators, “Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.”

Besides the false teachers from without and within, predators

may take the form of other pastors who desire the position, prestige, pay, and power of the senior pastor. Sometimes there are “power brokers” within the congregation who have sway with people and are highly regarded by the congregation. They have the power to throw their weight behind the pastor or oppose him and his agenda.

Finally, the pastor must be aware of women with deep needs for love and affirmation who are power-seekers. The pastor who is naïve, needy, or has poor boundaries is a target for these women. How can a pastor protect himself? Here are some suggestions:

A. Direct women to seek counsel from other women. This suggestion cannot be overstated. Because women understand women better than men do, it is both biblical and wise for older women in the congregation to counsel the younger women. (Titus 2:3-5). Although secular graduate school counseling programs teach that the counselor should be professional enough to counsel the opposite gender, this is always not the case. There is a biological attraction between the genders. Besides the opposite gender attraction, there are factors within the counseling setting that produce intimacy: prayer together, sharing confidential information, and consoling wounded emotions.

B. Join an accountability group and come under supervision. Pastors need accountability just as much as any other man. The accountability group should be composed of fellow pastors to avoid power differentials. The accountability group needs to have a

confidentiality policy with the exceptions of threatened suicide, criminal or terrorist acts, or the abuse of a minor under 18 years, a senior over 65 years, or a vulnerable adult. Beyond that, what is said within the group needs to stay within the group. Pastors need to feel safe enough to be vulnerable and not suffer repercussions for being open. There is great value in an accountability group for a pastor. Besides being a setting where he can share his sins, struggles, and dreams, an accountability group can pray for a pastor's needs, hold him responsible to carry out his stated plans and promises, help him learn to trust others, and give him fellowship and friendship on a deeper level.

Pastors also need supervision. To maintain their licensure, therapists are required to have supervision, meeting regularly with a board-certified therapist. The therapist shares in confidentiality-protecting terms about his cases and how he has counseled his clients. The supervisor provides feedback and makes suggestions to the therapist. Pastors, especially those doing counseling, need supervision too. The supervisor can be a seasoned pastor or a therapist who is not part of the congregation. Supervision humbles the pastor and provides him with accountability. It affords him the opportunity to get honest feedback.

C. Establish wise purity policies for pastors, staff, and congregation. In the appendix of this book are a number of sample policies for pastors and leaders to adapt to their particular needs. These

policies are written boundaries proclaiming what a leader or church will and won't permit. Policies, however, cannot guarantee pure behavior; pure behavior flows from a pure heart. Policies can be violated—but even if they are, at least the standards are stated and leadership can measure behavior by those standards.

D. Walk with the Lord by praying, meditating, and reading the Word. The best protection a pastor can have against attacks on his purity is his walk with the Lord. If he is walking in a close relationship with the Lord by practicing the basic disciplines of the Christian life, he will be a formidable foe for the enemy to attack.

E. Practice balance. This is especially important for pastors who are prone to over-ministering. The need to balance ministry, family, and personal time is challenging. One of the secrets to finding balance is to intentionally schedule time for each area. The pastor who builds into his schedule date nights, vacations, weekend getaways, leisure activities, and time for friends will find that balance. Though many wives tolerate marital neglect for the sake of the ministry, it is destructive to the marriage in the long term. A pastor must not minimize investing time in his marriage. The old adage, “Happy wife, happy life,” is still true. The best ally the pastor has is a supportive wife who believes in him

and his ministry. For that to happen, a pastor must invest time in their relationship.

The congregation can help to protect their pastor in this area as well. They need to place realistic expectations on him and his family. Too many congregations expect the pastor to meet their needs, even to the neglect of his own personal life or that of his family.

F. Practice self-care. As mentioned, it is important for a pastor to take regular time off, go on family vacations, have date nights, and daily debriefing time with his wife for pastoral balance. Equally valuable for the pastor is practicing self-care. The pastor needs to care for himself or he will burn out and drop out of the ministry. Without self-care he will become vulnerable to the six triggers of sexual sin: hurt, anger, loneliness, tiredness, boredom, and curiosity (HALTBC).

What does self-care look like? It means carving out the time to read for pleasure, to exercise regularly, to sleep eight hours each night, to make healthy choices in eating, and to come under pastoral supervision and/or a peer accountability group. The congregation can encourage the pastor to practice self-care by giving him time for vacations, paying for him and his wife to attend conferences for growth, and providing an allowance for books and videos. Whether they realize it or not, the congregation has a vested interest in the pastor's physical, emotional, spiritual, and marital health. They need to encourage his self-care.

The Marital Protection of the Pastor

As important as it is for a pastor to protect himself from the rigors of the ministry and the attacks of the evil one, it is equally as important for the married pastor to protect his marriage. The pastor needs a strong marriage relationship and a supportive wife to thrive in the ministry. Without both, he is a boxer fighting with one arm tied behind his back. How does a pastor protect his marriage? Here are nine suggestions:

1. *Regular sexual intimacy.* It is good for pastors and their wives to engage in regular, frequent sexual intimacy. Why is this so important as to be number one on my list of suggestions? Because although our culture is highly sexualized, the truth is stress, busyness, children, and a thousand other things take their toll on the sex lives of couples. Couples do not engage in sexual relations nearly as frequently as they once did or as needed. I rarely hear of couples divorcing who are having sex too frequently, but I hear of many couples divorcing who are living in the equivalent of “sexual celibacy.” Sex bonds and connects husbands and wives. For men it is the primary way they experience intimacy.

The Bible puts a high priority on couples prioritizing sex in their marriages. The Apostle Paul calls sex a “marital duty” and exhorts

couples not to “deprive each other . . . so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Cor. 7:3, 5). Sex strengthens the marital bond, strengthens one’s self-control, and is a preventative against the attacks of Satan. As I wrote in *The Power of Purity*, “Self-control and regular sexual intercourse protect a marriage against Satan’s temptations to be sexually unfaithful” (cf. 1 Cor. 7:5).³⁸

What constitutes “regular, frequent sexual intimacy”? The degree of frequency varies between countries and with age. For example, married or not, people have substantially less sex as they get older, although the decline in frequency of sex has more to do with the length of marriage or the relationship than with age. How often do American men and women have sex? The numbers given in the following Wikipedia article on human sexual behavior give some indication,

The frequency of sexual intercourse might range from zero (sexual abstinence) to 15 or 20 times a week. In America, the average frequency of sexual intercourse for married couples is 2 to 3 times a week. It is generally recognized that postmenopausal women experience declines in frequency of sexual intercourse, and that average frequency of intercourse declines with age.

According to the Kinsey Institute, average frequency of

38 I. Woolf, *The Power of Purity: God’s Design for Sex in a Sex-Saturated World* (Osseo, MN: Hopewell Publishing, 2009), p. 154.

sexual intercourse in USA is 112 times per year (age 18-29), 86 times per year (age 30-39), and 69 times per year (age 40-49).³⁹

2. *Regular confession of sin and prayer together.* It is important for a pastor and his wife to “keep short accounts.” By that I mean that sins against one another are not allowed to pile up and explode in a volcano of anger and recrimination. Instead sins need to be readily confessed and forgiveness exchanged. This keeps the marital slate clean and keeps the hearts of the pastor and his wife humble and tender (Eph. 4:32). Equally as important is daily prayer for one another. Whether done as they arise or prepare for sleep, at some point during the day pastors and their wives need to pray together. Prayer will bond their souls and knit their hearts together.
3. *Worship together.* Another marital protection is for the pastor and his wife to worship together. Worshiping together permits a couple to connect with God on the vertical. That is easier said than done, as more often than not Sunday is not a day of worship and rest for the pastor or his wife. It is usually a working day for both of them. Neither can

39 Human Sexual Behavior, In Wikipedia (Retrieved August 4, 2009, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sexual_behavior, 2008).

relax and enjoy worship as can parishioners. How then can a pastor and his wife worship together? They can practice worship informally together as a part of their daily routine and they can periodically take time off to worship with another church or invite a guest speaker or a staff pastor to fill the pulpit of their own church.

4. *Share the Word of God together.* The Bible exhorts wives to “learn in quietness and full submission” (1 Tim. 2:11). Paul tells the Corinthians that if women want to inquire about something biblical, “they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church” (1 Cor. 14:35). These passages put a premium on the pastor and his wife spending time together studying and discussing the Word of God. When a wife queries her husband about biblical truth, she accomplishes three things: (a) she affirms his position as head of the family, (b) she puts the responsibility of being the family priest and guiding the family in spiritual things squarely on his shoulders, and (c) if he does not have ready answers, her query forces him to dig into the Word of God.
5. *Communicate in depth.* The pastor and his wife need to regularly communicate clearly and deeply about issues

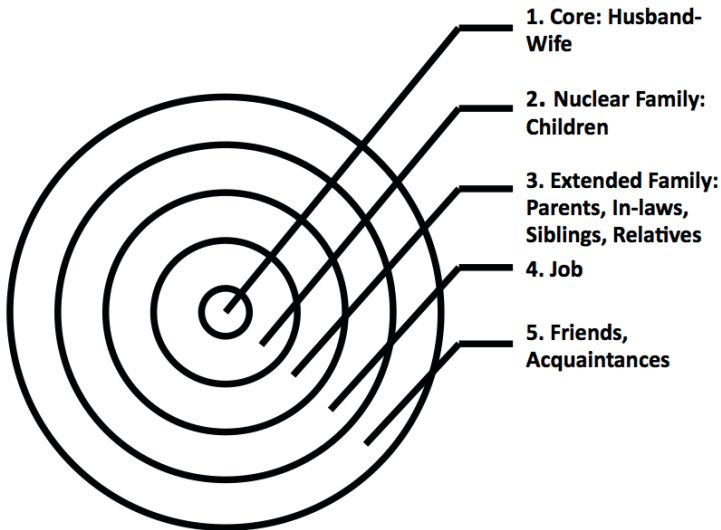
going on in their lives and with their children. They need to share their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for the future. Envisioning the future together is a mark of a healthy marriage. How can couples with busy lives find time to communicate this way? Here are three suggestions: (a) *Daily debriefing*. Couples can implement a daily debriefing time in which they catch each other up on their respective days. (b) *Annual planning retreat*. The pastor and his wife can invite someone to fill the pulpit while they go for a long weekend to do yearly planning. They can pray and talk through their family calendar for the year, plan their vacations, conferences, getaways, birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays. This type of communication and planning is a gift because it is a huge stress-reducer in their already busy lives. (c) *Road trips*. Road trips become prime times for pastors and their wives to talk. They can be together both physically and relationally. Each is a captive audience for the other and difficult topics can be broached and thoroughly discussed.

6. *Absolute fidelity*. Marriage is a relationship rooted in fidelity. It is launched with a spoken and unspoken covenant of mutual faithfulness and loyalty. Nothing and no one must be permitted to threaten that faithfulness.

Marriage is the core relationship of the family, and it must be protected at all costs. The pastor and his wife are at the center or core of the relationship rings (Diagram #2, “Relationship Rings and Right Priorities”). If the core of the family is threatened, every other relationship ring is affected. This becomes readily apparent in divorce, which impacts every relationship ring. Nothing must be permitted to threaten the marriage: not parents, in-laws, siblings, friends, the boss, neighbors, the state, or even the children. The husband-wife relationship must be the preeminent priority, the most protected relationship.

Diagram #2

Relationship Rings and Right Priorities



For example, the marriage is more important than either spouse's job. Employment can be found, but finding a life partner who is God's will is much more difficult. The marriage is also more important than the children. The children will grow up and "fly the nest." But the marriage must survive as the couple continues on as "empty nesters."

7. *Time together.* As mentioned under *Communicate in depth*, the pastor can protect his marriage by spending time talking with his wife. The ministry is a serious responsibility—eternal souls of men and women are at stake. Because the ministry is serious by nature, that means a pastor and his wife will need to carve out the time for fun things in life such as dates, vacations, playing sports, or finding a mutually enjoyable hobby.
8. *Refuse even the appearance of evil.* As mentioned under counseling, pastors must be wise. They cannot enter into relationships with other women regardless of how innocent they may be without raising the concern and suspicions of their wives. A wife will perceive any woman as a threat to her marriage. She should never be put in a position of competition for the time, affection, and loyalty of her husband. As his wife by marriage, he is exclusively hers and belongs to no one else. This means that a pastor must refuse to participate in anything that will threaten her or has

the “appearance of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22). What are some examples of things that have the appearance of evil? I’ve already mentioned counseling women. Other examples include taking a woman on the church staff to lunch to discuss ministry, driving a woman home alone because she needs a ride, giving or receiving full frontal robust hugs from women in the congregation, flirtatious words, smiles, or winks at women, or “alternative monitoring” (what a man does when he scans the horizon looking for options to the woman he is with).⁴⁰

9. *Listen to the counsel of a wise wife.* The final suggestion for protecting a marriage is a plea to pastors to listen to their wives. The pastor’s wife is a gift from God (1 Cor. 7:7). God brought them together, knowing that each needs the other and each has a unique complement of gifts and abilities to offer. The pastor who dismisses, ignores, or refuses to seek the wise counsel of his wife is spurning one of God’s best gifts to him. As a woman, she sees life from a different perspective; he needs her insights and wisdom. They make a great team, better together than they could ever be separate

40 I. Woolf, *The Power of Purity: God’s Design for Sex in a Sex-Saturated World* (Osseo, MN: Hopewell Publishing, 2009), p. 125.

from each other.

The Ministry Protection of the Pastor

Not only must the pastor protect himself and his marriage, but he must also protect his ministry. As Paul warned the Ephesian elders, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers” (Acts 20:28). Notice the priority Paul gives: *Watch over yourself first and then every person whom the Lord has entrusted you to shepherd*. I’ve already mentioned the general responsibility of the pastor to protect the flock, but what is involved in protecting his ministry as a pastor? Here are some important suggestions:

1. *Establish policies governing background checks and screening of the staff.* Stated policies regarding background checks and screening protect the pastor’s ministry from those who would defile, degrade, or destroy it. These are preventative measures a pastor can take. In the appendices are a number of sample policies and screening assessments that a pastor can adapt to fit his circumstances.

Why are background checks important to protect a pastor’s ministry? Background checks can divulge criminal history, divorce decrees, financial insolvency, and other issues about potential staff. This “vetting” process can reveal information that is not typically offered on a resume or in an interview. All staff, paid and unpaid, need to be vetted. This is especially critical for those serving in children’s ministry, youth

ministry, and the nursery. Those ministries in particular attract pedophiles and predators. Only a thorough vetting can bring that kind of information to light. Some larger churches employ a human resources service to do interviews, vetting, hiring, and firing of staff. A human resources service will know the state and federal requirements, which can free the senior or executive pastor to focus on their primary ministries of prayer and the Word of God.

Equally as important as background checks is screening. If a pastor does not screen his staff for character flaws, sexual purity, or a fragile marriage, he may be hiring a potential time bomb. We must hire men and women of godly character. Skills can be learned and ministry can be developed, but apart from the grace of God, character never changes. How can a pastor screen staff for character issues prior to hiring? He can administer or have administered personality inventories such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA), and the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF Questionnaire). None of these assessments is foolproof, but they can help a pastor in making wise personnel decisions.

Sexual addiction screening can be done using the Sexual Addiction Screening Test (SAST) by Carnes, or Woolf's "Am I Sexually

Addicted?” assessment.⁴¹ Included in the appendices is a questionnaire for a pastor to use in conducting a face-to-face sexual addiction interview—something I strongly encourage. Finally, marital assessment tools that a pastor can use to screen potential staff are: ENRICH, the Role Concepts Comparison Test and The Marriage Test (published by the Smalley Relationship Center).⁴²

2. *Establish clear hiring policies for all staff.* It is important to establish clear hiring policies, including a “Hiring Decision Tree” that details every stage of the hiring process. There must also be a clear ministry description and an employee handbook that details church standards on everything from acceptable attire to vacation and time off. Good communication in hiring staff is essential to protect the pastor’s ministry against charges of unspoken expectations. A sample staff “Hiring Decision Tree” is included in the appendix.

3. *Anticipate clergy misconduct.* How should a pastor handle the situation if one of his staff violates church policy, embezzles money, views pornography, or is involved in a sexual affair with a parishioner? Policies alone are insufficient to prevent moral failure. The pastor must protect his ministry by preventatively thinking through a

41 The SAST can be taken online at <http://www.sexhelp.com/sast.cfm>. The “Am I Sexually Addicted” assessment is available in Woolf’s *The Power of Purity: God’s Design for Sex in a Sex-Saturated World*.

42 PREPARE-ENRICH marital assessments are available through Life Innovations, Inc., <http://www.prepare-enrich.com/>.

“worst-case scenario” and putting together a written plan for how this type of situation will be handled. In working with several denominations, the National Coalition For Purity has put together Project Purity, a strategic plan for screening pastors. The plan also includes a section on how sexual sin by clergy will be handled. This document can be obtained by contacting NCFP through its website: www.puritycoalition.org.

The subject of sexual harassment should be addressed in both the employee handbook and through teaching and discussion with the staff. The church must be a safe, wholesome environment in which to work. Too many pastors are unclear as to what constitutes sexual harassment or what to do should it occur. It is wise to invite the human resources service representative or the church attorney to explain sexual harassment to pastors and staff.

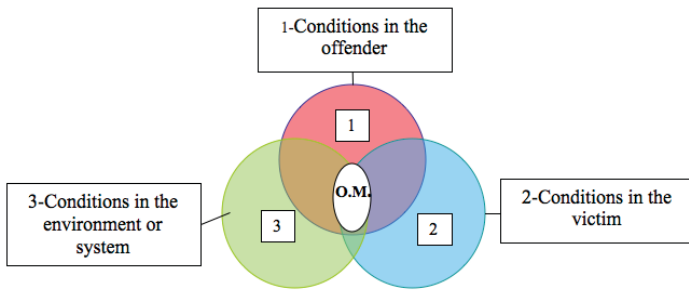
4. *Encourage the church to invest in the marriages of her pastors.* Pastors need to minister from a position of strength not weakness. The church can help them do that by strengthening their marriages. A pastor’s ministry is only as strong as his marriage. Pastors should be encouraged to take vacations, get marital counseling when needed, go on personal marital retreats, attend denominational retreats and conferences, and take time off from ministry. Pastoral burn-out is a real issue and a leading cause for why many are leaving the pastorate.

The Three Risk Factors for Pastors Providing Counseling

Before leaving the subject of the protection of the pastor, it is important to address the risk factors and pitfalls of providing pastoral counseling. Pastors providing counseling need special protection because, by counseling others, they are putting themselves in harm’s way. These factors are documented by Friberg and Laaser as they have surveyed hundreds of pastors.⁴³ The risk factors fall into three categories: (a) conditions pertaining to the pastor himself, (b) conditions pertaining to the parishioner who comes for counseling, and (c) conditions pertaining to the environment, whether the counseling office, the church, or the denomination. The “offending moment” may be the result of a convergence of all three factors or may be the result of any one factor (see diagram #3).

Diagram #3

Three Conditions Leading to Clergy Misconduct



O.M. = Offending Moment⁴⁴

43 Nils Friberg & Mark Laaser, *Before the fall: Preventing pastoral sexual abuse* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), pp. 1-66.

44 Nils Friberg & Mark Laaser, *Before the Fall: Preventing Pastoral Sexual Abuse* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), p. 9.

Conditions in the Offender, the Pastor

As mentioned, it is my conviction that pastors should not counsel parishioners of the opposite gender. Men should refer women to a female counselor. Here is why:

1. *Rationalization.* In the privacy of his office, a pastor can begin to lie to himself. Satan whispers to him, “You can get away with it. You’re above the rules. Look how hard you work. You deserve some pleasure for all the sacrifices you’re making.” Feelings of justification override his thinking. The pastor may begin to believe those lies and rationalize to himself why it is acceptable for him to do the unthinkable.
2. *Neediness of the pastor.* A pastor is vulnerable if he has family-of-origin issues such as attachment deficits because he never effectively attached to either parent. He may also have flexibility issues because he came from a family with rigid rules or no rules. If he was abused physically, emotionally, or spiritually, he is vulnerable.⁴⁵ Also, if the pastor does not make provision for self-care, he is vulnerable. The neediness of the pastor drives him to find someone or something to meet his deep, unmet needs. That someone may take the form of a counseling client.

45 For detailed explanation of the three types of abuse, see Woolf, *The Power of Purity*, pp.79-81.

3. *Marital conflict or lack of intimacy.* It is simply a fact that weak marriages produce weak ministries. If the pastor and his wife are at odds or not connected well because of lack of in-depth communication, their marriage is fertile ground for sexual sin.
4. *Sexual addiction.* The pastor may be sexually addicted. If he is not seeking help, chances of clergy misconduct are very high. He can only “act in” for so long. Soon his lust overwhelms his values. It is only a matter of time until his lust drives him to sexually “act out.”
5. *Poor or no boundaries.* As mentioned, the pastor either was never taught the critical importance of establishing clear boundaries in counseling or he views those boundaries as optional. He may have an attitude of superiority that says, “Boundaries are for lesser men, men who are unprofessional or don’t have the ability to restrain themselves like I do.”
6. *Naïve.* Some pastors who do counseling are simply naïve. They have never dealt with female predators or power-seekers. They may be unaware of the power differential in the counseling setting between pastor and parishioner. They may not understand the scope of their legal liability.
7. *Personality issues.* If the pastor has a weak ego or low self-

esteem or the need for power and status, he is vulnerable.

A parishioner who “strokes” his weak ego or bolsters his sagging self-esteem can become the object of his attention and affection.

8. *Personality disorders.* The DSM-IV indicates that a Narcissistic Personality Disorder (301.81) is one who thinks that he is special, superior, and unique to others.⁴⁶ The narcissist believes that others exist for him, to meet his needs. Thus in a counseling setting, the parishioner is there for him to meet his needs—and not the reverse.

Conditions in the Victim, the Parishioner

By providing counseling for a parishioner, the pastor is in the power position. He is to act professionally toward his client. He is the one who is supposed to be in control of the situation. That should be the case, but on occasion the roles are reversed and the parishioner is the one with the power. How does that happen? What conditions were present in the parishioner that led to sexual sin?

1. *Neediness of the parishioner.* Just as the pastor can come from a dysfunctional family and have unmet needs in his life, so also can the parishioner. The same family-of-origin issues of lack of attachment to one or both parents, rigid

⁴⁶ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), p. 418.

or permissive family rules, and abuse can be present in the victim. The client seldom recognizes this neediness, but others do. Although the client may not be able to articulate it she knows the uncomfortable feeling of having someone attach him or herself to her. It makes her want to avoid this person at all costs. An unsuspecting pastor may not realize the neediness of the parishioner until it is too late. The parishioner wants her needs met and the naïve pastor can be pulled into a sexual situation.

2. *Instrument of Satan.* This parishioner is sometimes called the “temptress,” for she is Satan’s instrument to destroy the pastor, his family, and his ministry. Temptresses often look and sound like a needy parishioner, but the difference is that the temptress has a hidden agenda of destroying the pastor. The temptress, like a spider, uses her sexuality to lure a pastor into her web. She dresses provocatively, discusses intimate details of her sex life, and uses flattery by telling the pastor what a remarkable preacher or counselor he is. She is a coquette—one who uses flirtation to gain the attention of men to accomplish her agenda. The pastor who is lured in by this kind of woman will soon find himself in a scandal. His marriage and ministry may not survive.

3. *Lacking moral discernment.* Sometimes the parishioner is simply naïve and lacking moral discernment. She has not been taught sexual virtue and she does not understand what is and is not appropriate in a counseling setting with a pastor.
4. *Personality disorder.* More common among females, the DSM-IV identifies a Borderline Personality Disorder (301.83) as one that is marked by impulsivity, pervasive instability, often angry outbursts, and sexual behavior. The client with Borderline Personality Disorder resists boundaries. The pastor who attempts to counsel such a parishioner will surely find himself in a battle for structure. Power struggles are the norm when counseling borderlines. The pastor may set boundaries for the counseling setting, but the borderline client will test them to see if the boundaries are rigid, permeable, or unenforced.
5. *Marital conflict or abandonment.* Finally, the parishioner may come to the pastor because of marital conflict. Marital conflict is an indicator of unmet needs in the marriage. A wife coming for pastoral counseling because of marital conflict wants her needs for communication, respect, understanding, and intimacy to be met. Because her husband is not meeting these felt needs in her life, the unsuspecting

pastor who does meet these needs in the counseling setting becomes attractive to her. He may subconsciously become a surrogate husband to her.

Conditions in the Environment, the Office, Church, or Denomination

Finally the conditions in the environment may contribute to sexual misconduct. How is that possible? Here are some ways in which the environment plays a factor:

1. *Culture of male superiority and power.* Some cultures have the pervasive concept of the macho male who is sexually promiscuous and cannot be faithful to one woman. Other cultures hold to a belief in male superiority and power. Women are thought to be inferior and treated with great disrespect. Clergy sexual misconduct is rampant in such cultures.
2. *Pastor is put on pedestal.* In many congregations, the pastor is viewed as the “star.” He is put on a pedestal and viewed as a “super saint.” He represents the identity of the congregation. Rediger helps us understand what a “star” is when he writes, The term “star” describes the unique combination of being the identified spiritual leader of a congregation, a recognizable moral leader in the community, and a performer in the spotlight leading people in their

liturgical worship of God. . . .No other profession offers an individual the responsibility of standing in front of an audience at least once every week and interpreting God, life, and morality for them.⁴⁷

Stars view themselves as privileged people. They believe they do not have to live by the same rules as the rest of the congregation. Their sins and shortcomings are overlooked or excused.

3. *“No talk” rule in church about sex or counseling the opposite gender.* In too many churches, sex is a taboo topic. The result is that sex or the issue of counseling the opposite gender are not discussed. The thinking on both topics is, “We know it happens; we just don’t want to hear about it.” Congregations that have a “no-talk” rule are setting themselves up for a sexual scandal. Sooner or later clergy sexual misconduct will occur. Sex is God’s idea, and so to treat it as shameful and unmentionable degrades both sex and God. By not talking about it, congregations play into the devil’s hand.

4. *Church or denominational “cover-up” of clergy sexual*

⁴⁷ Lloyd Rediger, *Ministry and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1990), p. 15.

misconduct. How should a church or denomination handle it when a pastor commits a sexual sin? Although most denominations have developed policies on this, few churches have. When sexual misconduct does occur, these churches panic (like the unprepared virgins of Matthew 25). Too often they attempt to avoid the guilt, shame, embarrassment, and loss of reputation in the denomination and community by covering up the sin of the pastor. Decisions on how to “spin” the official pronouncements are made behind closed doors by misguided leadership. The result is a cover-up that wounds the congregation. As mentioned earlier, that was the case with the Roman Catholic Church. The cover-up expanded beyond the congregational level to the denominational level as predatory priests were moved to other parishes or given “desk jobs” instead of being excommunicated. In Protestant circles this can occur when a church needing a pastor does not do an effective job of vetting him. Sometimes there is an unwritten code of silence among churches that protects offending clergy from being exposed and the church or denomination being embarrassed.

5. *No church policies on counseling in place*. Many churches have no written policies governing pastoral counseling or the counseling setting. This may be the result of a history

of godly pastors for whom no counseling policies were needed. The problem is that we are living in a different era with unprecedented sexual temptation. Wise churches and pastors have well-conceived, clearly-stated policies that are conveyed to all the staff and congregation.

Conclusion

The protection of the pastor, his marriage, and his ministry against sexual immorality is of critical importance to the Church of Jesus Christ. The church is only as strong as her leaders. Weak leaders, weak church. Strong leaders are leaders who protect themselves, their loved ones, and their ministries from attack. Protection against enemies within and without must be prioritized and intentional actions taken. To remain passive in the face of the sexual assault facing the church today is both sinful and suicidal. “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins” (Jas. 4:17).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POWER OF A

PURE DENOMINATION

... *Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Titus 2:13, 14

Flocking Together

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary says that a denomination is “a religious organization whose congregations are united in their adherence to its beliefs and practices.”⁴⁸ Denominations are collections of churches with common beliefs and practices; they flesh out the adage, “birds of a feather flock together.” That being the case, what is true of churches is equally true of denominations. If churches have difficulty addressing the issue of sexual sin, so do denominations.

Characteristics of a Pure Denomination

What would a pure denomination look like? What characteristics would it manifest?

1. *Screening for all seminarians, clergy, and full-time workers.* A pure denomination screens all seminarians

48 denomination. (2009). In *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved August 14, 2009, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/denomination>.

and clergy for sexual purity. This helps to eliminate clergy sexual misconduct. A good screening program identifies the sexually addicted and predators. For pastors, missionaries, and evangelists who struggle with sexual sin such as viewing pornography or masturbation, a confidential screening program is critical. It must be a program that differentiates between sin and addiction, providing the safety needed so clergy will not fear losing their ministries and paychecks. Clergy need the freedom to come for help, yet at the same time churches and denominations need to be protected.

2. *Teaching on sexual purity.* A pure denomination provides careful, in-depth instruction for its seminarians on sexual purity as part of a strategy to put godly men in positions of leadership. This teaching may take the form of formal classroom instruction as part of the Master of Divinity program. It may be done at the denomination's district conferences or national conference. It also may be packaged as part of the adult or teen Sunday school curriculum produced under the auspices of the denomination. However it is done, a denomination committed to purity must intentionally teach its seminarians, clergy, and full-time workers on sexual purity.

3. *Policies on sexual purity.* Most denominations have well-crafted, well-conceived policies on disciplining offending clergy. However, they usually do not have preventative policies in place to protect pastors and congregations from misconduct. As previously mentioned, policies cannot prevent misconduct. But they can provide clear, specific standards so that when misconduct occurs there is something against which to measure it. Additionally, there are legal reasons for having written policies. Some examples of church and denominational policies on sexual purity are included in the appendices of this book, as well as a list of websites with downloadable policies.

4. *A restoration plan for offending clergy.* A pure denomination knows how much time, money, and effort has been expended to develop clergy. It knows that it is a costly proposition to toss them aside as though they are damaged goods that can never be fixed. If sinning clergy can be healed and purified, that is preferable. Just as God restores and reconciles damaged sinners, denominations have the opportunity to do the same for sinning clergy. Knowing that some clergy will sexually sin, a pure denomination has an intentional plan for helping them to heal and be restored to ministry.

Not all clergy can be restored to ministry. Some are sexually addicted and should not be restored until they are healed. Some have committed non-criminal and criminal sexual misconduct that disqualifies them from leading Christ's flock. Some need to be imprisoned for their crimes. Project Purity, the National Coalition For Purity's denominational thrust, provides a table showing the clear differences between the five categories of sexual sinners (see table #4).

Table #4

Project Purity—A Plan for Dealing with Clergy Sexual Sin⁴⁹

Category (descriptive, not technical)	1	2	3	4	5
Description of behavior	Individual struggle only; no involvement with another person	Impersonal involvement with another person	Addictive sexual behavior in categories 1 or 2	Personal involvement with another individual	Criminal sexual behavior
Examples of behavior (not exhaustive)	Pornography Fantasy Masturbation	Anonymous Internet chat rooms Anonymous phone sex	Individual or impersonal sexual behavior pursued addictively	Prostitution Adultery	Rape Child molestation Incest Voyeurism Exhibitionism
Recom- mended conse- quences for behavior	Pastor privately confidentially pursues purity through Every Man's Battle For Purity	Pastor privately confidentially pursues purity through Every Man's Battle For Purity	District superintendent and church informed. Healing sabbatical provided. Removal from pastorate for one year while pastor pursues purity. Re-evaluation after one year.	District superintendent and church informed. Removal from pastorate and relocated to a city and church with a restoration ministry	District superintendent and church informed. Removal from pastorate and authorities contacted (police, child protective services)

49 I. Woolf, *Project Purity*, (Osseo, MN: Hopewell Publishing, 2009), D. Linde, Unpublished paper, *Project Purity: A ministry initiative of the North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church of America in Consultation with Dr. Irv Woolf, National Coalition For Purity* (2008).

Every Man's Battle For Purity

For pastors who sexually sin in categories one or two, the prescription is for them to enlist in Every Man's Battle For Purity (see chapter seven). Every Man's Battle For Purity is a four-stage strategy to help sexual sinners live in sexual purity. It is an effective strategy for 91% of those who complete the first three stages (The Battle, Purity Boot Camp, and Purity Platoon). Pastors enlisting in Every Man's Battle For Purity must humble themselves and see themselves as a sinner needing the grace of God and the accountability of other men. They are not in a position to lead in the purity ministry until they have had a minimum of six months of sexual purity (zero tolerance for masturbation, sexual fantasy, and pornography). Once they have reached that plateau, they qualify to be trained to be a sergeant and lead a Purity Platoon.

A Healing Sabbatical

For a pastor who has become sexually addicted to pornography, masturbation, or sexual fantasy, he will need more help. A healing sabbatical can be provided by his congregation with the goal of helping the pastor to be healed and restored. What is a healing sabbatical and how can it benefit both the local church and the sexually addicted pastor? To put it simply, the pastor who is sexually addicted needs time to work on his addiction and become free. He should not be permitted to continue in his position of preaching and leading the flock. A pastor in

bondage to sexual sin is not the model of holiness and is not free to lead the flock into holiness. Pastors need to lead from a position of strength, not weakness. A healing sabbatical is a plan to help the pastor break the bondage of sin in his life and find healing, hope, and sexual wholeness.

A healing sabbatical typically is offered by the congregation as a loving gesture to a wounded pastor who has fallen into category three sexual sin (see table #4). If the pastor is healed and breaks the bondages of sexual sin in his life, the congregation benefits through a pastor who now preaches and leads in the strength of purity. The pastor benefits by having his secret sin brought into the light, halting the hypocrisy that has marked his life, and getting the help he and his family need. It is an opportunity to deepen his walk with the Lord, as well as attach even more securely to the congregation. A new love is typically birthed in the pastor for a people who have been loyal to him through this crisis time in his life.

Healing sabbaticals may be as short as six months or as long as one year depending on the pastor's progress toward purity. An expanded explanation of the healing sabbatical is contained in the appendix of this book.

A Restoration Ministry

Pastors who are involved in category four sexual sin (see table #4) have moved beyond non-personal involvement in sexual sin to

personal involvement. Involvement with another person is a quantum leap in degree and depth of sexual sin. Category four sins by a pastor require his resignation from ministry to the congregation. Although typically not criminal in nature, category four sins damage the reputation of the congregation, harm the cause of Christ, and are often grist for the media mill. Can a pastor who sins in this way be restored to pastoral ministry? The answer is yes, but not without significant time, effort, and the grace of God. A well-conceived restoration plan needs to be adopted by the denomination.

What are the important components for a restoration plan for clergy with sexual sin in category four? In order to gain a fresh start and escape the pressure he is under, the sinning clergy and his family should be relocated to a new community, preferably one with a church that has a restoration (recovery) ministry. Ideally a restoration team in the new community meets the pastor and his family shortly after arrival. The team is composed of a team coordinator (point man/woman), a marriage and family therapist, a financial counselor, a realtor, and an attorney. The team is aware of the shock and upheaval in the family's life. Because of the pastor's sexual sin, every area of the family's life has been impacted: their finances, their friends, their jobs, their children, their church, and their extended family. As a word of caution, there is a fine line on the part of the team between enablement and abandonment of the clergy. The offending pastor's family may need more help up front, rather than later

when they are settled.

For further information on the implementation of a recovery church ministry in a denomination, contact the Evangelical Free Church of America. The EFCA has crafted a well-conceived plan that it has implemented for many years.

The Backdoor Blessing of Incarceration

Finally, pastors who have committed category five sexual sins (criminal sexual behavior) should be removed from the pastorate and reported to the police. Pastors who have committed criminal sexual sins need to be incarcerated. However, incarceration can be a backdoor blessing instead of a curse. Jail time can be a blessing for a pastor because it ends the charade and duplicity in his life. It serves as a catharsis for his guilty conscience, enables him to get the help he needs, protects the public from any further offenses, and upholds the holiness of God because sin is punished (cf. Rom. 13:4).

5. *Honest acknowledgment of sexual sin and help for the victims.* A pure denomination walks in the light and speaks the truth. It refuses to spin or lie when its pastors sin. As previously stated, one of the most offensive (and ineffective) practices of denominations is to attempt to cover up the sinful behavior of clergy. Denominations that attempt to do so will “sweep it under the rug only to trip over it

later.” Covering up sin is lying. It is the sin of Achan, the “troubler” of Israel. Achan buried spoil taken from Jericho that was banned, and in doing so he cost the lives of 36 men in the battle of Ai. Denominations need to be less concerned with preserving the reputations of the sinning pastor, the church, and the denomination—and more concerned about those who have been victimized by his sin: the victim, the congregation, and the community. Too little help has been provided to the victims of sexual sin.

Project Purity

A Proactive Strategy for Pastors, Congregations, and Denominations

Pastors, congregations, and denominations need a plan—a strategy for dealing with sexual sin—that is hopeful and helpful. They need a strategy with the goal to not “shoot the wounded,” but rather to salvage and restore to ministry those who can be restored. Most pastors, congregations, and denominations do not have that kind of strategy.

Pastors who sin need a way to cleanse their consciences and break sinful habits. Congregations need to know there is a plan for helping their pastors if they are engaging in impersonal sexual sin such as pornography or masturbation. Denominations need a clear strategy for screening seminarians entering the ministry, new pastors coming into a district, and pastors in a district who need help. Most of all, the issue of clergy sexual sin needs to be brought into the light and no longer treated

as a taboo topic.

What is Project Purity?

Project Purity is a ministry of the National Coalition For Purity (NCFP) to denominations. It is a strategy for a denomination to deal with clergy who sexually sin. The purpose of Project Purity is to partner with a denomination to provide resources and help for ministry workers and others in a manner that is consistent with the life and teachings of Jesus. Project Purity provides ministry workers and church and denominational leaders with preventative and restorative strategies for dealing with sexual sin.

Preventative strategies provided by Project Purity include:

(a) sample church and denominational policies on computer usage, installation of computer filters and network firewalls, pastoral counseling, and pastoral discipline (see samples in appendix), (b) screening of seminarians and pastors for sexual addiction by competent Christian counselors, (c) teaching and educating seminarians, pastors, ministry workers, and congregations on sexual purity, and (d) strategic planning with denominational leaders on implementing Project Purity.

Project Purity can provide restorative strategies that include counseling of ministry workers, along with the purity ministries Every Man's Battle For Purity and Women of Truth. These are the two primary restorative strategies of NCFP for pastors, ministry workers, and their wives.

Why is Project Purity needed?

Here are three reasons why Project Purity is needed:

1. *The culture.* The culture is highly sexualized and becoming more so. Ministry workers are going to use the Internet with its unparalleled access to research and information. The easy access also means that without protection, ministry workers will be tempted to download immoral pornographic and sexual materials. In addition to the Internet, the media in general constantly bombards Christians with sexual messages. Therefore, an intentional strategy is necessary for ministry workers to maintain or regain personal purity in relation to their use of Internet technology and the media.
2. *Clergy sexual misconduct.* A second reason for Project Purity is that pastors are sinners; some have violated their values by sexually sinning. They need a way to cleanse their souls, break sinful habits, learn humility and accountability, become pure, and recover the joy of ministry. Congregational and denominational leaders need a clear strategy for helping these sinning shepherds.
3. *Denominations need a plan.* Denominations need a plan for dealing with clergy sexual misconduct that is both preventative and restorative. The plan should have a

preventative element that teaches pastors and churches how to protect themselves from sexual sin. They need a restorative element that takes into account that clergy *will sin* and will need restoration. The plan needs to be grace-based; a plan that provides hope for repentant sinners.

Screening Ministry Workers

The three major component parts of Project Purity are screening, educating, and counseling ministry workers. All first-year seminary students and new pastors to a denomination's district would be required by the denomination to be screened for sexual addiction. Screening also would be available but not required for established pastors in a district, unless mandated by the district superintendent. An established pastor might choose to be screened because he knows that he struggles with sexual sin and wants to proactively deal with it in his life. It is a means of becoming the pure shepherd he and his flock needs.

The screening consists of four basic stages: (a) contacting the screener (a professional therapist trained in dealing with sexual addiction) to set up an appointment; (b) filling out pre-assessment informational and assessment forms and a personal history questionnaire; (c) meeting with the screener for a two-hour appointment, including a one-hour sexual purity interview, and (d) receiving the screener's written assessment and recommendations. The screening is confidential and the district superintendent is informed only in generalities unless categories

#3-5 (see Table #4) are evident in the ministry worker's life.

Typical screening questions.

How is it possible for one person to decide if another is sexually pure? In one sense, no human being can decide if another is sexually pure. Purity is a matter of the heart and the thoughts of the mind, as well as the actions of the body. Nevertheless, it is both possible and beneficial to have a competent individual evaluate the sexual purity of a pastor on the basis of behavioral criteria that are widely recognized in the therapeutic community. The three main criteria are pornography, fantasy (not the occasional succumbing to mental temptation but the intentional dwelling on real or imagined sexual experiences), and masturbation.

Is it possible to quantify sexual purity? Isn't sexual purity more than behaviors or thoughts? What about the condition of the heart or the overall direction of a life? To claim to have a pure heart but yet engage in impure behaviors is dualism. Purity of heart will always be reflected in purity of behavior and speech, but not necessarily the reverse. Sexually pure behavior may or may not indicate a pure heart. Sexual purity, then, is more than abstaining from pornography, fantasy, and masturbation. To do that alone would simply produce "white knuckle" sobriety.

The rub comes in that only the Lord knows the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12) and the direction of our lives. Fallible human beings are left to discern what is inside a man by observing his

outward appearance (1 Sam. 16:7). However, Scripture does teach the connection between the heart and the outward behavior. Consider what Jesus says in Matthew 15:18, “But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’” Jesus also told the Pharisees, “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit” (Matt. 12:33). The outward demonstration of sexual purity is seen in abstaining from the fundamental behavioral issues of pornography, fantasy, and masturbation. Pastors who are pure in heart abstain from these behaviors. If they slip, they repent quickly and run to the cross for forgiveness and cleansing.

Screening instruments.

What screening instruments are used? The two pre-assessment instruments used are the Sexual Addiction Screening Test (SAST), authored by Patrick Carnes, and the “Am I Sexually Addicted?” assessment by Woolf. During the interview, the screener utilizes the Project Purity Interview Questions (see appendix). Based upon the results of the two sexual addiction instruments, the Project Purity Interview Questions, and the Personal History Questionnaire (see appendix), an experienced screener can make a reasonably accurate assessment of sexual addiction in a client.

Screening results.

Based upon the information gained from the screening, how

can a denomination help its clergy while at the same time protect its congregations? Table #4 not only describes categories of sexual sin but also recommends consequences for denominations to use with clergy who sexually sin. Under categories one and two, Project Purity recommends that a pastor privately and confidentially pursue purity through joining Every Man's Battle For Purity. This will provide him with the tools, accountability, and opportunity for deep repentance that he needs. For pastors who fall into category three, Project Purity recommends that they be given a "healing sabbatical" (see appendix) so they can pursue purity. A pastor needs time away from the pulpit so that he can be cleansed and then return to minister from a position of strength not weakness. A healing sabbatical requires disclosure to the district and the local church, with the goals of healing and reclamation for the pastor and protection for the church.

Pastors whose screening indicates they are in category four must be removed from their pastorates. The ideal is that a category four pastor is relocated to another city and assisted in finding a church with a restoration ministry. He needs a fresh start and the chance to simply work in non-church employment while restoring his marriage and family.

Finally, pastors who fall into category five need to be removed from their pastorates and reported to the authorities. Most will likely become incarcerated. Society and the church needs to be protected from them. Some are predators and, even if rehabilitated and released from

prison, ought not to be back in the pastorate and permitted to lead the flock of God.

Educating Ministry Workers

Project Purity teaches pastors, seminarians, and other ministry workers about sexual purity. This is done through workshops at denominational and district conferences and retreats and through seminary classes. Project Purity provides education on the holiness of God (the basis for all purity), the current climate of sexuality in the culture and the church, why pastors are particularly vulnerable to sexual sin, and how pastors, churches, and denominations can protect themselves. It also educates on how pastors can protect their marriages, current treatment modalities for sexual addiction and what works, purity policies for the church to implement, how to launch a purity ministry for men and women in the local church, and a plan for healing and restoration for sinning pastors (called “Finding Hope Again”).

Project Purity has also packaged this information into a course for seminary usage entitled, “Protecting the Shepherd and the Flock of God.” It involves reading current books on personal and congregational purity, writing a major paper on a three-year plan for helping a church to become sexually pure, DVD clips to illustrate lecture points, 15 hours of lecture and group discussion. The seminary also has the option of using this course as a springboard for screening seminarians for sexual addiction.

Counseling Ministry Workers

The opportunity to speak into the lives of God's shepherds is a great privilege and a heavy responsibility. Project Purity offers individual counseling for ministry workers and couple counseling for clergy couples. All counseling is confidential. Project Purity has a wealth of resources, including referral to Christian counselors trained in sexual addiction counseling, homosexual counseling, marriage and family counseling, and sexual dysfunction counseling. In addition, Project Purity can provide help in finding Christian clinics and residential treatment facilities specializing in sexual addiction, as well as Christian organizations that focus on helping pastors struggling with financial and time management. Finally, Project Purity can provide consultation to church and denominational leaders on strategic planning necessary to implement a sexual purity ministry.

Conclusion

It is not enough to launch purity ministries for laymen in a church. Pastors, seminarians, denominational leaders (on the national and district level), and all types of ministry workers need purity too. Like the laity, leaders struggle with sexual temptation and sin. But unlike the laity, leaders are held to a higher standard (Jas 3:1). Jesus reserved His harshest criticism for the leaders of His day who lived in hypocrisy. Pastors must practice what they preach. Denominations must place a premium on purity. It cannot be one among many priorities because

purity affects all aspects of the Christian life: passion for Christ, worship, prayer, Bible study, giving, ministry, and evangelism, to name just a few. Purity must be priority-one for a church or denomination to draw near to God to experience His power and blessing.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW TO PURIFY THE LOCAL CHURCH

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Revelation 19:7, 8

Weighing the Options

Many options are being employed today to help men and women gain sexual purity, some more effective than others. In surveying the landscape of what is available, the options can be categorized in two groups: those that originate without the local church (parachurch) and those that originate within the local church. After listing all the different approaches taken to sexual purity, we want to answer four questions: (a) “What works?” In other words, out of all the options, what has proven effective in helping to purify the local church? (b) “What is a sexual purity ministry and how does it differ from a 12-step program?” (c) “What interventions are used in a sexual purity ministry?” and (d) “Can sexual addiction be cured?”

Parachurch Options

These approaches to sexual purity are sponsored by parachurch organizations and are often led by laypeople. They include:

1. *Conference call accountability groups.* This approach is used by BraveHearts Ministry, founded by Michael Leahy. It features small groups of men from all around the United States holding each other accountable for sexual purity through a weekly conference call.
2. *Citywide men's conferences.* This approach includes the sexual purity message and numerous other topics covered in a weekend conference held in a stadium or large venue in a city. Promise Keepers is an example of this approach.
3. *Intensives.* Intensives may be run for one week or for a weekend. Intensives are usually geared for men and women who are sexually addicted. They feature in-depth teaching, personal therapy, prayer, and confession of sin. Examples of intensives include Faithful and True Ministry (directed by Mark Laaser), and Every Man's Battle Workshop (sponsored by New Life Ministries and directed by David Wever).
4. *Online ministries.* These ministries feature everything from online counseling to courses on sexual addiction to resources and links on sexual purity. Examples are too numerous to mention, but two that stand out are Pure Online (an Internet-

based sexual addiction course by Joe Dallas) and the Pure Intimacy website (sponsored by Focus on the Family).

5. *Residential treatment programs.* These ministries feature live-in treatment programs for sexual addicts. With the exception of Love In Action Ministries and Pure Life Ministries, all residential treatment programs for sexual addiction are secular in approach, although often include a spiritual component. Two examples of Christian residential treatment programs are Pure Life Ministries (founded and directed by Steve Gallagher) and The Source, the residential program of Love in Action Ministries in Bartlett, TN (directed by Tommy Corman).

6. *Sexual addiction counseling.* This approach is offered by many Christian sexualaddiction therapists and counseling clinics, featuring one-on-one counseling with a therapist trained in sexual addiction counseling. Examples of Christian therapists specializing in sexual addiction counseling include Chris McCluskey, Mark Laaser, Russ Willingham, Harry Schaumburg, and Ralph Earl. Christian organizations with multiple clinics that address the issue of sexual addiction include the New Life Clinics (directed by Steve Arterburn) and Meier Clinics (directed by Paul Meier).

7. *Courses.* Christian seminaries and colleges teach courses that touch on sexual addiction. Denver Seminary features such a course in its Doctor of Ministry program entitled, “Treating the Addicted and Dysfunctional Family System.” Fuller Seminary has incorporated a course on sexual addiction in its School of Theology entitled, “Pastoral Care and Sexuality,” taught by Mark Laaser. Finally, the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC) offers the Professional Certificate Training Program in Sexual Addiction Counseling. This program, entitled “Treating Sexual Addiction,” features video courses. The courses are taught by sexual addiction experts including Mark Laaser, Daniel Amen, and Marnie Ferree.
8. *College and university sexual purity conferences.* These conferences, held on college and university campuses, challenge students with the message of sexual purity. An example is Porn Nation sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ and presented by Michael Leahy.
9. *Books, DVDs, videos, and audio tapes.* The number of books, tapes, and videos dealing with sexual addiction and sexual purity is voluminous. The resource list in this book contains many of these.

Local Church Options

Local church approaches are those that originate within a local church or are sponsored by a local church. These include:

1. *Local church purity conferences.* Weekend conferences specifically focused on sexual purity are held in churches. This approach has been taken by Ted Roberts, founder of Pure Desire Ministry. John Piper, founder of Desiring God Ministries, sponsored a sexual purity conference in 2004 at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN, entitled, “Sex and the Supremacy of Christ.”
2. *Men’s ministries.* This approach covers sexual purity as one of the teaching topics in a men’s ministry in a local church. National models of men’s ministry using this approach include Top Gun Ministries (launched by Elmbrook Church and Stuart Briscoe) and Men’s Fraternity (taught by Robert Lewis). Small group Bible or book studies are part of many men’s ministries. These groups study books on sexuality such as *Every Man’s Battle* (2000) by Arterburn and Stoeker and *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction* (2004) by Mark Laaser.
3. *Sermons on sexual purity.* Most evangelical pastors will periodically preach a sermon or sermon series on sexual purity.
4. *Support groups.* This approach involves small groups of men meeting together for accountability, prayer, and teaching. The

focus is sexual sobriety and the target audience is typically men who are sexually addicted. The approach is usually a variant of the 12-step program popularized by Alcoholics Anonymous. Examples of this approach include Celebrate Recovery, a national Christian recovery ministry launched by Saddleback Church and Rick Warren and used by many churches, Pure Desire, a sexual addiction support group for men launched by Ted Roberts, as well as secular support groups such as Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, and Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous.

5. *Personal accountability.* Many men are partnered with other men in one-on-one accountability relationships.
6. *Local church purity ministry.* This approach involves a multi-stage approach to sexual purity. The emphasis is on sexual purity, not sexual addiction. An example is Every Man's Battle For Purity sponsored by the National Coalition For Purity. Models for both men's and women's purity ministries in a local church are included in Appendices L and M.

What Works?

So what has proven most effective in purifying the local church? In hundreds of self-administered, anonymous surveys, men consistently rank their Purity Platoon as the most effective tool in helping them to become pure. Purity platoons (small groups) are the heart and soul of the

local church purity ministry, *Every Man's Battle For Purity*. Men put the value of a Purity Platoon providing encouragement, prayer, and high-level accountability at the top every time. It ranked higher than reading a book on the subject of sexual purity, counseling with a professional therapist, listening to a sermon or CD on sexual purity, participating in a live or online Bible study on sexual purity, or attending a conference, retreat, or seminar on sexual purity.

Why Are Purity Platoons So Effective?

Why do these men who have struggled with sexual sin regard a Purity Platoon as more effective? Here are seven reasons why Purity Platoons are an effective treatment modality for men:

(a) *Intimacy*. Unlike other approaches, a small group such as a Purity Platoon builds intimate relationships. These relationships go beyond the superficial “news, weather, and sports” relationships most men experience. Men develop friendships that last a lifetime—friendships built on truth and honesty.

(b) *Honesty*. A Purity Platoon is a safe venue for speaking the truth to one another in love. The platoon signs a covenant with a strong confidentiality paragraph and becomes a closed group (meaning new members are not added after the second week). This sets a strong foundation for honesty, as it is easy to lie to one person—even a

therapist—but hard to lie to a group of liars. Men in Purity Platoons understand the nature of sexual sin because they are sexual sinners. They know about the ingrained habit of lying for they all have experienced it themselves. Lying is a consistent symptom of men in bondage to sexual sin.

You probably flinched when I said that all sexual sinners lie, but here are four reasons why: 1) They lie because the shame of their sin is significant. 2) They lie because they are afraid that if the truth were known they might be rejected, punished, or abandoned. 3) They lie because they might have to change if the truth of their sexual sin surfaced. 4) They lie because they don't want those they love to be hurt or embarrassed by their behavior.

(c) *Encouragement.* Men in small groups are able to encourage one another to persevere when temptations are strong and the flesh is weak.

(d) *Prayer.* Men in small groups can pray focused, in-depth prayers for the real needs of one another.

(e) *Accountability.* Probably one of the most significant benefits of a small group is accountability. Accountability takes both a personal and corporate form. Personally, men in a Purity Platoon are assigned a purity partner. These partners call each other daily to monitor their progress and pray for one another. Corporately, men in the platoon share with the whole platoon how they are doing in their sexual purity and

where they are struggling. Their struggles become the basis for their prayer requests. Men need other men to sharpen them (Prov. 27:17) and to “hold their feet to the fire” through real accountability.

(f) *Retrieval*. Although this falls under the category of accountability, men in a Purity Platoon understand that should they fall into the snare of sin and abandon the platoon because of their sin and its accompanying shame—the platoon will not abandon them. Purity Platoons take seriously the motto, “Leave no man behind.” Platoons routinely go after those who are absent without leave (AWOL) to retrieve them. No man is coerced to return to the platoon, but he is sought out and made aware that the men in his platoon want him back and are making the effort because they genuinely care for him.

(g) *Teaching*. Men in Purity Platoons are given biblical teaching and tools designed to resist the devil. Men are taught to discipline their lives by reading the Bible, memorizing Scripture, praying for one another, and learning skills to keep themselves pure for a lifetime. Men are taught about repentance, healing childhood wounds, repairing their marriages, and God’s design for healthy sexuality.

The “Permeation Principle” of Purity

Why all the emphasis on men? Men are given the role and responsibility of leading the church and family. If men are living in sexual purity they will function as “leaven in the lump” of the church. Soon the entire church will feel their leavening effect. This “permeation

principle” is found in the Bible. Jesus speaks of the permeation power of leaven (Matt. 13:33, Lk. 13:21). The Apostle Paul says, “A little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6, Gal 5:9). When a critical mass of men in the church becomes pure, the women in the congregation quickly become aware of it. A culture of purity begins to develop within the church, and it is not long before women desire purity for themselves and their children. The church becomes a safe environment in which sinners can be truthful and honest about their sins.

What Is a Sexual Purity Ministry?

A sexual purity ministry is a ministry whose focus is to purify the local church. Most sexual purity ministries in churches take a holistic approach in seeking to purify men, women, teens, parents, and leadership. For men, a sexual purity ministry is uniquely designed for what will reach them most effectively. Every Man’s Battle For Purity, developed by the National Coalition For Purity, is specially designed to reach men, both single and married. It utilizes a military theme to inspire characteristics exemplified in the military: courage, discipline, valor, loyalty, *esprit de corps*, accountability, submission to authority, and chain of command leadership.

Women require a very different approach to sexual purity than men, as women do not desire a military theme. Women of Truth, the women’s sexual purity ministry, emphasizes relationship, intimacy, truth, and healing.

Teen boys over the age of 15 years are permitted to participate in the first two stages of Every Man's Battle For Purity. Since the average age of first exposure to pornography is 11 years old, most teenage boys have been exposed to pornography and have discovered how to masturbate. For most, the information provided in The Battle (stage one) and Purity Boot Camp (stage two) does not violate their innocence.

A sexual purity ministry instructs parents in how to protect their children from sexual sin. Issues addressed include: what constitutes safe touching, how to recognize signs of sexual abuse in children, how to establish family standards to protect the innocence and modesty of children, how to deal with nocturnal emissions, how to teach on sexual reproduction, courtship versus dating in older teens, sexual standards for engaged couples, and the difference between privacy and secrecy.

Finally, a sexual purity ministry provides instruction for pastors, elders, Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders, and leaders of men's and women's ministries. These leaders are instructed in what constitutes sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual contact, identifying and removing sexual predators, sexual purity policies of the church, and purity resources for their ministries.

How a Purity Ministry Differs from a 12-Step Program

The differences between a 12-step program and a purity ministry in a local church are numerous:

1. *The goals are different.* The goals of all 12-step programs are to

stop the destructive behaviors and live in sobriety. Attendees in 12-step sexual addiction groups are told they will always be sex addicts for the rest of their lives. In contrast, the goals of a purity ministry are to stop the destructive behaviors, transform the heart, and restore relationships with God and spouse. Attendees are taught that their identity is in Christ, not in their sin. They are taught they can live free from bondage to sexual sin.

2. *The target audiences are different.* Twelve-step sexual addiction programs target the sexually addicted. A purity ministry is broader, targeting all men and women who are sexual sinners.
3. *The power sources are different.* Twelve-step groups look to a “higher power” for strength to make changes. A purity ministry looks to Jesus Christ alone, knowing that there is power through His Spirit to change the heart.
4. *The populations are different.* Twelve-step groups are populated by mixed genders of any religion. A purity ministry such as Every Man’s Battle For Purity is for Christian men, and Women of Truth is open to Christian women.
5. *The identities are different.* Twelve-step groups find their identities in their addictions. Each week this is reinforced as attendees announce their names and declare that they are sex addicts. A purity ministry instead finds its identity in Christ, and attendees are encouraged to see themselves as God sees them.

6. *The relationships to the local church are different.* A 12-step group is a parachurch group that uses the facilities of a local church and is not dependent on the local church. A purity ministry is sponsored by a local church and is dependent on that local church for facilities, attendees, leadership, and promotion.
7. *The durations are different.* A 12-step group is open-ended with no stopping point. A purity ministry has a definite duration and stopping point.
8. *The accessibilities are different.* A 12-step group is an open group allowing newcomers access at any time. A purity ministry (both men's and women's) is open for a short period and then becomes a closed group and is not open to newcomers.

Interventions Used In a Purity Ministry

Because sexual immorality is a holistic problem affecting body, soul, and spirit, it requires a holistic solution. The purity ministry employs a wide variety of cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual interventions in waging war on sexual immorality.

Cognitive Interventions

A cognitive intervention is any skill learned or activity done that is designed to change thinking. A number of cognitive interventions are used in both the men's and women's purity ministries:

1. Teaching is used extensively in all four stages of Every

Man's Battle For Purity and in Women of Truth.

2. Believing that God will renew the minds of men and women, a key cognitive component of Every Man's Battle For Purity and Women of Truth is the memorization of Scripture passages (Ps. 119:9, 11; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24).
3. One sexual addiction counselor calls prayer, meeting, phone a friend, reading, and prayer, the "Five Commandments of Purity."⁵⁰ Reading in the Bible, texts, and purity curriculum are important cognitive interventions.
4. Men are taught in Purity Boot Camp and in Purity Platoon of Every Man's Battle For Purity to have a "default" thought they can use when they are bombarded with sexual thoughts or fantasies. The default thought is a visualization technique in which a man being attacked by a sexual thought immediately pictures in his mind the Lord Jesus Christ hanging on the cross. He visualizes the blood of Christ dripping down the cross. He sees himself kneeling at the foot of the cross and the drops of blood hitting him on the back of his head, cleansing his

50 Doug Weiss, *The Final Freedom: Pioneering Sexual Addiction Recovery*, (Ft. Worth, TX: Discovery Press 1998,) p. 119.

thoughts. Men have reported that it is nearly impossible for them to retain unclean thoughts when visualizing this default thought.

5. Self-talk is part of Every Man's Battle For Purity. When bombarded by sexual temptation, men are taught in the Four-Step Fire Drill to declare aloud to themselves, "I will not sacrifice my purity today for (name the sexual sin)." When men hear themselves confess their purity, it strengthens them to practice it.
6. Writing is an important part of Every Man's Battle For Purity and Women of Truth. Men write out their sexual histories, the cost of being sexually impure, sexual sins in their family lineage, and a Four-Step Fire Drill of what they will do and where they will go when under sexual attack. Women will journal their thoughts and feelings, as well as complete a manual for their small group.

Behavioral Interventions

Behavioral interventions are skills or actions taken to change behaviors. Thirty-five different behavioral interventions are used to change men's sexual behavior in Every Man's Battle For Purity. They range from holding men accountable for their actions in a Purity Platoon, to teaching men to "bounce" their eyes and look at women from the

neck up, to removing the television when on a business trip alone. The behavioral interventions include relational interventions for changing men's behaviors with their wives. Some of the relational interventions used in the marital dyad include asking for the forgiveness of their wives, partnering with their wives for a 30-day sexual fast, and inviting their wives to pray with them each evening at bedtime. Behavioral interventions used to change men's interactions with their children include pronouncing a blessing on their children, teaching boundaries and respect for privacy to their children, and family modesty. The entire list is found in the *Purity Platoon Battle Plans* and *Maturity Platoon Combat Training Manual*.⁵¹

Spiritual Interventions

Because sexual immorality is an issue of the heart, the cognitive and behavioral interventions alone are insufficient to produce lasting, permanent change. Only spiritual interventions can change the appetites of the heart. Some of those spiritual interventions include:

1. Calling upon men and women to confess and repent to God and their spouses for their sexual sins, asking God to create within them clean hearts (Ps. 51:10).
2. Asking men and women to forgive and release those who have

51 Irv Woolf, *Purity Platoon Battle Plans* (Maple Grove, MN: National Coalition For Purity, 2010) and *Maturity Platoon Combat Training Manual* (Maple Grove, MN: National Coalition For Purity, 2010).

hurt them and sinned against them.

3. Challenging men and women to begin a time of daily communion with God involving prayer, praise, and Bible reading.
4. Requiring memorization of Bible passages and recitation to a purity partner. The internalization of Scripture is a powerful intervention that has the power to penetrate and cleanse a life (Heb. 4:12, Ps.119:9, 11).
5. Inviting men and women to pray for one another daily and to pray during their platoons and small groups.
6. Taking “captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). Both men and women are taught to recognize and reject sexually unclean, immoral, violent, or profane thoughts.
7. Challenging men and women to make amends and ask forgiveness from everyone that they have hurt in the past, but only if doing so will not cause greater damage.
8. Inviting men in Maturity Platoons, as well as women, to consider such church practices as water baptism, church membership, and ministry involvement.

The Value of a Small Group as an Intervention

The pull of our culture is toward rugged individualism, but the pull of our hearts is toward community. The men’s and women’s purity

ministries are built around small groups (Purity Platoons for men and Women of Truth groups for women). Both small groups have two tasks: pursue the group's purpose and maintain relationships among members. If either task is neglected, problems develop. Based on Acts 2:42-47, effective small groups typically have four components: (a) nurture (teaching), (b) spirituality (prayer and worship), (c) mission (ministry), and (d) community (fellowship).

All small groups form covert and overt boundaries. Covert boundaries are unstated but recognized within the group. Issues of openness and trust are among those covert boundaries. Overt boundaries are stated and easier to identify. They tell where and when the group will meet, duration of the group, how the group will be led (autocratic, democratic, *laissez-faire*), the rules of the group, the purpose and goals of the group, and the nature of the covenant-based commitment (if used).⁵²

Purity Platoons and Women of Truth groups have the four component parts of an effective small group. In addition, they have clear overt and covert boundaries and utilize covenant-based commitments.

Small groups are not a new concept either to the church or as a form of intervention. The Bible presents two examples of small groups in action: (a) Jesus led a small group of disciples for three years, and (b) the early Church met in small groups in homes (Acts 2:46; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor.

52 Barker, Johnson, Malone, Nicholas, & Whallon, *Good Things Come in Small Groups: The Dynamics of Good Group Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985); Bell, J, *Breaking cultural "habits of the heart" in small groups*, (*The Christian Ministry*, 25, 1994), pp. 15-17.

16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 1:2).

Although the most common treatment for men impacted by sexual immorality is counseling with a therapist, nearly all therapists recognize the effectiveness of a small group as a treatment model. Small groups exercise the power to discipline through group pressure. They impose accountability, strengthen members to overcome problems, provide collective wisdom and insight for members, meet the need for community (to belong), give security and emotional support to their members, and generate growth in knowledge and prayer.⁵³

Twelve-step groups are recommended for aftercare by virtually all those in the secular and Christian therapeutic community. That 12-step group may be Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, or, what Doug Weiss calls, a “Freedom Group.”⁵⁴ The key six recovery ministry principles for churches considering a recovery program for marriages impacted by pornography are: (a) The recovery ministry must have pastoral support. (b) Recovering sex addicts need their own group. It does not work to make them part of a standard men’s accountability group. Their issues are too complex and specialized for such a group. (c) Male and female sex addicts should meet in separate groups. (d) The recovery ministry

53 Jackson, E. N., *Group Counseling: Dynamic Possibilities of Small Groups* (Philadelphia, PA: Pilgrim Press, 1969).

54 Weiss, 1998.

must provide a support group for spouses. (e) As with any ministry, leadership is crucial for success. (f) Sexual addiction recovery groups are absolutely dependent on anonymity and confidentiality.

Both the spouse addicted to pornography and his or her partner each need to address their separate issues in a gender-specific group. Additionally, both spouses need to participate in a couple's group to address issues in the marriage. This is the pattern of personal and marital recovery that Mark Laaser and his wife Debra followed in their recovery from the ravages of sexual addiction.⁵⁵

The anticipated impact of helping men become more sexually pure through a Purity Platoon is that the *homeostasis* in the marriage will become destabilized, and positive change will occur. Homeostasis is the principle that families seek to normalize and equalize the family system to keep it in balance. Problems must be explained, denied, blamed, or dealt with to keep the system in balance. Equilibrium must be maintained, which means change must be resisted. Yet for change to occur in a family system, homeostasis must be broken. If the husband changes through the purity ministry to become more sexually pure, his change should upset the homeostasis of the marriage and change in the marital dyad should occur.

Is There a Cure for Sexual Addiction?

55 Debra Laaser, personal communication, July 11, 2005.

If by the word “cure” one means that the sexual addict is *no longer susceptible to relapse*, then it is not possible to be cured according to the sexual addiction literature. The literature affirms recovery and healing as the goal. Researchers and clinicians say recovery involves: (a) a process, (b) acceptance of the disease, (c) commitment to change, (d) surrender of the need to control the compulsion, and (e) willingness to learn from others in recovery in a 12-step support group and trained therapists. Sexual addicts are never said to have “recovered.” They are said to be “recovering.” Again, containment is possible but a cure is not. Virtually all secular addiction experts encourage recovering addicts to supplement 12-step group attendance with a relapse prevention plan.

However, the “contained-but-not-cured” approach seems inconsistent. Most secular addiction counselors embrace the medical-disease model of addictions, therefore sex addiction is seen as a sickness. Yet in the medical realm, researchers and physicians cure sicknesses every day, and researchers are constantly searching for cures for cancer, heart disease, etc. Cure is a word that is hardly ever mentioned in the field of addictions regardless of the type of addiction (food, gambling, alcohol, drugs, sex, work, etc.). As a Christian therapist, Schaumberg recognizes the problem when he writes,

...much of the medical-disease model of addiction on which these programs [12-step groups] are founded fails to address the deep issue of sin in the heart. Therefore, if

you become involved in a recovery group, I encourage you to pray that the Spirit of God will search your heart and help you address issues that might be neglected in a recovery plan.⁵⁶

I would submit that *a cure for sexual addiction is possible*. For a cure to take place, healing must occur in the heart of the addict, for that is the core of the problem. Heart healing can only be accomplished by the Healer of hearts (Jer. 24:7; Ezek. 11:19). The Psalmist says, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps. 51:10). It is possible for God to do what people cannot. God can spiritually remove wounded, sinful, soiled hearts and replace them with pure, clean hearts. That is the foundation on which the men’s purity ministry is built. Cured sexual addicts no longer have the desire to sexually sin; they have new hearts. That does not mean he or she is not tempted; rather it means that the addict has been changed in heart and no longer desires sinful sexual gratification. The sweet song of the Savior has replaced the siren song of sexual temptation.⁵⁷

Conclusion

The Bible declares of Moses, “He chose to be mistreated along

⁵⁶ Harry Schaumberg, *False Intimacy: Understanding the Struggle of Sexual Addiction*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997), p. 97.

⁵⁷ Sam Storms, *Pleasures Evermore: The Life Changing Power of Enjoying God*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2000), pp. 104-106.

with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time” (Heb. 11:25). The key to overcoming sexual sin and sexual addiction comes down to choices. Sin is pleasurable, but it is short-lived pleasure followed by long-term pain. For the Christian, it is choosing not to be satisfied with the passing, temporary pleasures of sin. It is choosing to be more enamored with God than with sin. It is choosing to be faithful to marriage vows because of love for one’s spouse and one’s God. It is choosing to “take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5b), rather than toying with sexual fantasies. In that split second when the temptation to betray one’s values, spouse, God, children, and brothers is strong, it is choosing to “flee from sexual immorality” (1 Cor. 6:18). It is choosing to “not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Rom. 13:14b).

Teaching men and women to make godly choices is the purpose of a purity ministry. A godly man who lives his life in sexual purity will make better choices and be a better husband. The wife of such a man will find her marriage more satisfying.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COUNSELING THE

SEXUALLY ADDICTED

These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.

Revelation 14:4

Not Beyond God's Grace

Every Man's Battle For Purity is effective with 91% of the men who complete the program, but what about the other 9%? This small percentage is mostly comprised of men who continue to score above "13" on the Sexual Addiction Screening Test and for whom the Purity Platoon was not enough. Are there some men and women who are so obsessed in their sexual sin that they are beyond the grace of God? I don't believe anyone is beyond the grace of God, but some sexual sinners are simply more wounded and require more help than others. Should all who are sexually addicted be referred to specialists or escorted to in-patient treatment centers for the addicted? No. Well-trained pastors and therapists who are generalists can minister effectively to the sexually addicted.

Origins of Addiction

The standard approach to treating addiction is to utilize a 12-step model for treating all addictions. However, this “one-size-fits-all” approach has a number of drawbacks: (a) it fails to distinguish between the type of addiction (sex, food, alcohol, work, exercise, etc.), (b) it makes no distinctions between addicts (male, female, teen, senior adult, etc.); all are treated alike, (c) it is not specifically Christian, and (d) it does not address the heart issues of the addict. The heart is the seat of all moral values. Jesus said, “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt. 15:18, 19). Since the root of problem is the heart, a treatment approach must be adopted that will address the issues of the heart.

What Are Addictions?

Are addictions considered sicknesses that require medical treatment? Are they genetic predispositions inherited from ancestors that lead to fatalism? Are they personal sins that have been enshrined as gods and given power and worship? It is my contention that addictions begin as sinful choices. They are choices we make of our own free will that violate God’s standards and give the devil access to our lives. Our consciences convict us as we make these wrong choices, but our emotions and unbelief (we don’t truly believe God can or will meet our

needs) convince us to violate our consciences and disobey His Word.

Once begun, addictions become ingrained habits and take on lives of their own. It is not long before brain chemistry and neural pathways come into play, rendering the addict physically and psychologically dependent on the addiction—even to his own harm. Even genetic predisposition can play a factor. The intergenerational sins of ancestors can predispose (but do not mandate) the addict to the addiction. Predisposition does not, however, mean fatalism.

Addictions Are Idols of the Heart

If the heart and its values are the source and root of all addictions, and if all addictions have been given power in the life of the addict, then all addictions have become gods enshrined in the hearts of the addicted. Any god other than YHWH (Almighty God) is an idol. The Psalmist writes, “For all the gods of the nations *are* idols: but the Lord made the heavens” (Ps. 96:5; KJV) and “The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Nor is there *any* breath in their mouths. Those who make them are like them: *So is* everyone who trusts in them” (Ps. 135:15-18; NKJV). The New Testament warns Christians, “Dear children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

Addicts Are Not Victims

Because all addictions are the result of initial sinful choices,

all those addicted cannot evade responsibility and call their addiction a sickness, the result of genetic predisposition, or fatalism. Addicts have choices—and thus none are victims (those who have no choice in what happens to them). Since addicts are not victims, treating them as such only enables them in bad behavior and sinful thinking. *Addicts need to accept responsibility for their choices and repent of their sinful decisions.*

Characteristics of All Addicts

All addicts lie—and that includes sex addicts. Why do they lie? As mentioned earlier in this book, there are four basic reasons: 1) They lie because the shame and degradation are often too much for them to bear. 2) They lie because they are self-protective and afraid that if the truth were known they might be rejected, punished, or abandoned. 3) They lie because they might have to change if the truth of their sexual sin surfaced. To tell the truth means their supply line to feed their addictions might be cut off. Because they think they will die without their addiction, they feel compelled to lie to protect the addiction. 4) They lie because they don't want those they love to be hurt or embarrassed by their behavior. Lying is a consistent symptom of men in bondage to sexual sin.

All addicts, including sex addicts, minimize their sin. If a sex addict says he masturbates once per week, invariably he masturbates 2-3 times per week. If he says he looks at porn on the Internet for one hour per day, he looks at it 3-4 hours per day. Are addicts intentionally trying

to deceive? Usually not. They simply lose track of time when they are acting out on their addictions. Laaser says they enter the “land of numb” and sometimes even have blackouts during which they do not remember doing anything. They don’t realize how enslaved they are to their sin.⁵⁸

All addicts, including sex addicts, experience symptoms of withdrawal as they make progress in their recovery. Progress in counseling the sexually addicted is often marked by anger, defensiveness, and resistance. The lies believed by the addict have convinced him that he cannot survive without his addiction. As the addict moves toward health and sexual wholeness, the poison of sexual sin gradually loses its grip on his/her soul. Just as alcoholics go through the dry heaves, delirium tremors, and other withdrawal symptoms, so sex addicts go through anger, defensiveness, defiance, and resistance.

Tools for Counseling the Sexually Addicted

What tools are available to a pastor or counselor who ministers to the sexually addicted? Tools for counseling the sexually addicted include: (a) *Objective assessments*. Assessments such as the Sexual Addiction Screening Test (SAST) and the “Am I Sexually Addicted?” Assessment can help both pastor and client to see the degree of addiction. (b) *Sexual purity ministries*. Ministries such as Every Man’s Battle For

58 Mark Laaser, *Faithful & True: Sexual Integrity in a Fallen World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), pp 44, 45.

Purity provide direct ministry to those struggling with sexual addiction. The downside is that this ministry is a “one-size-fits-all” ministry whose main focus is sexual sinners, not sexual addicts. (c) *Secular addiction groups*. Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous are all based on the 12- step medical model of addiction counseling (see chapter six for a critique of the medical model). (d) *Christian addiction groups*. Celebrate Recovery and others treat all addictions the same. As mentioned earlier, sexual addiction is a unique sin (1 Corinthians 6:18) and cannot be treated like any other addiction to be successful. (e) *Counseling*. Sexual addiction counseling with a trained sexual addiction counselor can be beneficial for those for whom Every Man’s Battle For Purity is insufficient or unavailable. (f) *In-patient residential treatment*. For the severely addicted, nothing short of in-patient treatment in a residential facility will be effective. The downside to this approach is the cost of such treatment. (g) *Online courses, books, sermons, and seminars*. There are many cognitive tools available for those seeking help. Most are beneficial to a point, but without accountability all are ineffective at overcoming the addiction. (h) *Prayer and Scripture memorization*. Both are a necessary part of a holistic treatment plan for the sexually addicted.

A Biblical Strategy for Counseling the Sexually Addicted

A Two-Stage Biblical Approach

Sexual addiction, like all other addictions, is a heart issue. The external behaviors, words, sinful thinking, and attitudes of the addict are all symptomatic of a deeper, internal, hidden issue—a heart issue. Jesus declared, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her *in his heart*” (Matt 5:27, 28, emphasis mine). My contention is that all addictions are forms of idolatry. Since addiction affects the whole person, all addictions affect the body, soul, and spirit of a person. All addictions have a spiritual component in that the addict has made his addiction a god in his life. The addiction is given power and holds the addict in bondage.

This sin of idolatry is at the root of all addictions; all addicts are idolaters at heart. They worship their idols by serving them, thinking of them constantly, spending time and money on them, and prioritizing them over everyone and everything else. They try repeatedly to stop worshipping their idols, but are drawn back to them like moths to a porch light. The Psalmist speaks truth when he states we become like that which we worship.

The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them *will be like them*, and so will all who trust in them. (Ps. 135:15–18, emphasis mine)

All addiction is idolatry in the heart of the addict; thus the symptoms of the addiction are secondary. We can become symptom-free but still be addicts in our hearts. With that as the underlying premise, what strategy should a pastor or counselor take to deal with the real problem, the idolatry of the addict?

It is my belief that addicts need a biblical strategy that will accomplish two key actions: (a) bring them into an in-depth relationship with the Bondage Breaker, Jesus Christ, and (b) break the bondage of the addiction. This two-stage strategy is the same strategy put forth by the Apostle James. He writes in James 4:7, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” That is the proper order of the two stages: first, submit to God and second, resist the devil. The promise is that if we will do both stages, the devil will flee from us. He cannot stand against a believer who has humbled himself and submitted himself to God—and who has taken intentional, active steps to resist the devil.

The Power of Submission

What It Means to “Submit”

As addicts begin their journey on the road to freedom from idolatry, the first command (not suggestion) is to *submit* themselves to God. What does it mean to submit and how is that done? The Greek term used for submit in James 4:7 is ὑποταγή (*hypotagē*) from ὑποτάσσω

(*hupotassō*) meaning “tactical yielding.”⁵⁹ The key thought is to submit oneself to another’s authority and control. That is easier said than done, as addicts hate losing control of their own lives. Control makes them feel more secure. To surrender control of *any* area of their lives is a fearful proposition; to willingly surrender control of their lives to God is no less fearful. In their minds God has failed them repeatedly in their quest for purity, so why should they yield control to Him? He may hurt them, they believe.

ὑποτάσσω (*hupotassō*) was a term used to describe the condition of slaves chained to the oars of Roman galley ships. They were under the authority and control of the galley master and were expected to row in synchronization with the other slaves, or face punishment. It is a fitting word picture of an addiction. Addicts are slaves chained to their addiction under the cruel control of the devil to do his bidding (2 Tim. 2:26). The same word is used in Ephesians 5:22, 24 of the role of wives in relation to their husbands. They are to ὑποτάσσω (*hupotassō*) themselves to their husbands even as the church is to ὑποτάσσω (*hupotassō*) herself to Christ Jesus. Submission, then, is to humbly bow the knee before another acknowledging his authority to command us. Remember 1 Peter 5:5, 6: “‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you in due time.” Humility is the path to God’s grace and

59 Gerhard Delling, ὑποταγή, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), p.46.

a key part of submission. Humble people submit to those in authority over them. Proud people do not. God gives grace and power only to the humble. Addicts will need His grace and power if they are to break free from idolatry.

A Question to Ponder

Why do men and women chafe at the notion of submitting themselves to those in authority over them? Addicts have “authority issues,” which is a nice way of saying that they rebel against authority and only submit under duress. God cannot lead a rebel. One author defines submission as “allowing God to lead us through others.” Can God lead addicts through others? Unless addicts submit to God, which involves learning to submit to others, they cannot have His power in their lives to break the bondage of their addiction.

What Is the Extent of Our Submission to God?

Unlike submission to other authority figures in our lives, submission to God is an all-encompassing submission. It is submission to God’s authority in every area of our lives: our marriages, our dating, our work, our money, our sex lives, our health, our relationships, our worship ... *every area*. He must be Lord of all.

What Submission to God Looks Like

What does it entail to surrender control of my life to God? It means that God’s will, not mine, is the preeminent purpose for my living (cf. Matt. 26:39). It means joyful surrender to His will in every area of

my life: marriage, singleness, children, vocation, church, finances, sex, recreation, health, and relationships. It means a life of prayer, asking and listening to God: *Where would He have me go? What would He have me do? What would He have me say* (1 Cor. 16:7-9)? Submission to God will mean a life of sacrifice—sacrificing my will, goals, desires, aspirations, and dreams for His. It may mean a life of persecution and even death (cf. Matt 5:44, 10:28, Luke 21:12, John 15:20, 2 Tim. 3:12). John Piper writes, “A life devoted to making much of Christ is costly. And the cost is both a consequence and a means of making much of him. If we do not embrace the path of joy-laden, painful love, we will waste our lives....The Calvary road is costly and painful, but it is not joyless.”⁶⁰

Resisting the Devil

What It Means to Resist the Devil

Resisting the devil is the second stage in the biblical strategy for overcoming sexual addiction. James 4:7 says, “Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. *Resist the devil* and he will flee from you” (italics mine). What does it mean to resist the devil? The word James uses for “resist,” ἀντίστημι (*anthistēmi*) means “to oppose, stand against.”⁶¹

Resisting the devil means to oppose him both defensively and offensively.

60 John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), p. 63.

61 Arndt & Gingrich, p. 66.

Defensively resisting the devil.

The devil is called the “tempter” (Matt. 4:3, 1 Thess. 3:5). He attacks by tempting people to sin. Christians must resist his attacks defensively by protecting themselves. There are many ways we can defend ourselves against the devil’s attacks, but I want to mention the two most important—armor clothing and fleeing. Christians soldiers must start by clothing themselves daily in the armor of God (Eph. 6:13-17). Armor is meant to protect a soldier from the attacks of an enemy. As soldiers in the Lord’s army, we are told to put on the armor of God—and never told to remove it.

Secondly, like Joseph of the Old Testament, Christians must flee from compromising situations (Gen. 39:12). Fleeing from sin is not cowardice but a wise defensive strategy. We are not to intentionally put ourselves in harm’s way. The Bible commands Christians to flee fornication, idolatry, the love of money, and youthful lusts (1 Cor. 6:18, 10:14, 1 Tim. 6:11, 2 Tim. 2:22).

Offensively resisting the devil.

Offensively, we wield three primary offensive weapons in resisting the devil. First, we have the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, the Bible. That is the offensive weapon Jesus used when He battled the devil in Matthew 4. Three times Jesus used the phrase, “It is written...” to combat the devil’s temptations. He then followed up each instance by quoting the Bible. The Word of God spoken aloud

has the power to defeat the devil; the spoken Word of God is a powerful offensive spiritual weapon (cf. Eph. 6:17, 19, 20). Consider Paul's words, "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:3, 4).

The second offensive weapon Christians must wield against the devil is prayer. Prayer is both a defensive and an offensive weapon, for it allows us to call on the power of Almighty God to come to our rescue and defend us. Prayer allows us to call on His power offensively to defeat the devil (Eph 6:18, 19). An example of offensive power of prayer is found in Acts 4:24-31. Peter had just returned to the church after being released by the Jews. The assembled group of Christians prayed for boldness to proclaim the gospel. God answered by causing an earthquake, filling them with the Spirit, and giving them the boldness for which they had asked. Prayer is a powerful weapon.

A third offensive action is the blood of Jesus Christ. Listen to the words of Revelation 12:10, 11, "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. *They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb* and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death'"

(emphasis mine). Believers alive during the Great Tribulation on earth are able to overcome the devil by the power of the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is our eternal atonement for sin, cleansing us from sin and protecting us from the wrath of God. When the “accuser” accuses us to ourselves and God, we must plead the cleansing, forgiving power of Christ’s blood.

A Practical Way to Apply the Blood of Christ

In Every Man’s Battle For Purity we make practical the application of the blood of Christ by instructing men to seize immoral thoughts when they recognize them and immediately recall their “default thought” of Jesus Christ hanging on the cross. A man can default to envisioning himself as a sinner kneeling at the foot of the cross, Christ’s blood dripping down and hitting the sinner on the back of his head, cleansing his thoughts. Men have repeatedly testified that no immoral thought can stand against that default thought.

Signs of Freedom

As you help your client apply the principles of submission to God and resisting the devil, how will you know if you are making any headway with your sexually-addicted client? What will be some signs that he is breaking free from his bondage? Here is a list of nine practical signs of freedom:

1. He is pursuing honesty with himself, God, his family, and friends.

2. He is releasing the shame he has carried by breaking the silence about his sin.
3. He is discovering and combating destructive thought patterns.
4. He is pinpointing triggers and cycles of addiction in his life.
5. He is finding his true identity in Christ.
6. He is learning to identify and express his feelings in a healthy way.
7. He is building healthy relationships with both sexes.
8. He is beginning to express himself in radical openness and honesty.
9. He is facing the painful events of his past by acknowledging the pain and embracing forgiveness.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Matthew 16:18

God Has a Plan

God's plan for rescuing a lost world is through His Son Jesus Christ, who was born to die and rise again. Those who believe in Him by faith comprise His Church. In His Great Commission, Jesus commanded His disciples, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20). So the task of reaching a lost world has been committed to the church. Though composed of sinners, the church is still God's vehicle for the spreading of the gospel unto the salvation of sinners.

The Purity of the Bride and the Spread of the Gospel

The contention of this book is that God desires clean vessels through whom to dispense that life-giving gospel. The Apostle Paul declares this thought,

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

(2 Tim. 2:20-22)

As Paul says, “If a man cleanses himself from the latter (ignoble purposes), he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master...” Put in theological terms, to be useful to God, the church must sanctify herself. The Lord is looking for clean vessels. This book is about how to help her become that. It is my contention that since the sheep rise no higher in their purity than their shepherds, pastors must champion purity by both their examples and their words. Purity must become part of the core values of every pastor and every church. God will bless a holy church since He Himself is holy (1 Pet. 1:16). How can He not bless His Son’s Bride when she walks in holiness?

True Repentance

Purity is critical to the life of the church—and repentance is critical to purity. Put another way, sexual sinners cannot become pure without repenting. What does it mean to truly repent? How do we know if we have truly repented? Is there such a thing as “false repentance”?

Rembrandt and Repentance

On one of the walls of our counseling office is a large copy of Rembrandt’s famous painting, *The Return of the Lost Son*. Unbeknown to many, the painting is a self-portrait painted by Rembrandt at the end of his life. Rembrandt paints himself as all three main characters in Jesus’ parable in Luke 15: the lost son, the older brother, and the joyful father. He did this because he saw himself in all three characters at different stages in his life. As a young man, Rembrandt was the lost son, the rebel, who partied hard and squandered his talent and money. As a middle-aged man, Rembrandt saw himself as the religious but judgmental older brother who publicly condemned others. Finally, Rembrandt, in his last years, saw himself as the forgiving father filled with compassion for repentant sinners. It reminds me and all who see it that God forgives and receives repentant sinners who return to Him.

Lost and Found

The key word I want to emphasize is *repentant*. God forgives and receives repentant sinners; those who come to Him broken and

honest. The story of the lost son in Luke 15 is one of the best illustrations of true repentance found anywhere in the Bible. Let me focus on the first half of the story and explain why repentance must be preceded by brokenness. Jesus tells this parable as one of three illustrations to answer the Pharisees and scribes' complaint that, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2). Each of the three parables features an owner who loses something (a sheep, a coin, a son), finds it, and urges everyone to rejoice with him at the discovery. The cohesive thought binding all three parables together is that God cares for the lost and rejoices over them when they are found. But these three parables also have differences. In the first two parables the owner goes after the lost object (sheep, coin) to search for it. That is not the case in the third parable of the lost son. The father does not go after the son to find him and try to rescue him. There is a reason for that.

The Making of a Lost Son

In Luke 15:11-15, the parable begins by describing the story of two sons of a wealthy farmer. The younger son, evidently sick of the daily grind of life on the farm, demands his share of his inheritance from his father. That's odd, isn't it? What wrong with this picture? Let me suggest several things: a) He demands his inheritance (*Father, give me the share of property coming to me*). Based upon his choice of words and how he phrases his request, it is clear that his relationship with his father is strained at best. b) Inheritances in that day and even now are

distributed after death not before. This is a slap in the face to the father. It is equivalent to saying, “I can’t wait for you to die so I can have your money.” Shockingly, the father complies and gives it to him. c) Finally, under Jewish law the older son would receive two-thirds of the inheritance and the younger son one-third (Deut. 21:16, 17). The thinking was that the older son would need more income to care for his mother and sisters who received no share in the inheritance. Inheritances were traditionally distributed only to sons, and so both sons received their inheritances early.

The younger son takes his share, gathers everything he owns, leaves the farm, and heads for the *far country*, presumably where Gentiles live. What does he do in the far country? He squanders all he has on *reckless living*. The King James Version says he *wasted his substance on riotous living*. What is reckless or riotous living? The Greek word used here means, “dissolute, loose, debauched, or profligate living.” His older brother thinks he blew it on prostitutes (15:30). Whatever he spent it on, it clearly is unrestrained spending, for in short order he is broke. Not coincidentally a severe famine hits the far country at the same time that he is broke and unemployed. This famine is used of God to bring him to true repentance. In the face of the famine, the son *began to be in need*. The former farmer now seeks employment as a farmer again. He finds himself feeding pigs in the field and longing for pig food because he is starving. The Bible says *no one gave him anything*. As we

shall see, like the famine, that is a significant statement.

Repentance Is Coming to One's Senses

In the midst of dire circumstances, the prodigal *comes to himself*. The New International Version says he *came to his senses*. He is now thinking clearly, seeing things as they really are. No more self-deception or lying to himself. No more blaming his father or his circumstance or his God. The fog is gone and the light of truth has illuminated the darkness of his thoughts. He reasons to himself that even his father's hired men on the farm have plenty to eat yet he, as his son, is starving. In a flash of humility and repentance, he determines he will return to his father, admit his sinfulness and unworthiness, and beg him to take him back as a hired worker on the farm.

Brokenness Must Precede Repentance

What can we learn from this first half of the story? Brokenness must precede repentance for repentance to be genuine. No brokenness, no true repentance. Three factors contribute to brokenness: a) *Dire circumstances*. In the case of the lost son, the severe famine helped to break his rebellious, defiant spirit. Dire circumstances such as loss of job, health crisis, financial bankruptcy, and divorce can be used of God to break our rebellious, defiant spirits. b) *Foolish decisions*. The lost son squandered his inheritance and all he had on reckless living. Our foolish decisions contribute to brokenness. c) *Finally, no rescuers*. No one, not his father, not his brother, not his friends, no one rescued the lost son. To

rescue someone only harms them by delaying their brokenness. They do not become broken or repentant and do not learn the lesson God wants them to learn.

Once broken by dire circumstances, foolish decisions, and no rescuers, the lost son *comes to his senses*. Brokenness caused him to repent. Coming to one's senses is the same as repenting. To repent in Greek means "to change one's mind or thinking." That changed thinking only comes when one is broken. Sexual sinners must repent of their sins, but they must first be broken. They must hit the bottom, feel the pain, and become desperate for purity. Only then will they come to their senses, begin to think clearly, and make the changes necessary to live in sexual purity.

False Repentance

No one wants to be broken. Brokenness is painful and humbling. Brokenness is to admit failure and defeat. It often means losing that which is valuable. Yet, without brokenness there is no true repentance. Many sexual sinners never come to the place of brokenness. Their repentance has been false repentance, a repentance of the head but not the heart. They hate that they've been caught or that they are being pressured to change their behavior. They feel bad about their sin, but they don't truly *hate* their sin. They are not broken by the sorrow they've caused their wives and children, or the hurt they've caused God.

Without brokenness, sin is never uprooted from their souls. It is never extinguished. Like a campfire that has not been doused with water, false repentance permits a smoldering ember to fan into flame again in the future. False repentance thinks sin is dead, when it is not.

False Repentance Illustrated

The Bible presents a picture of false repentance in Esau, Jacob's brother. In Hebrews, the writer declares:

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

(Heb. 12:15-17, KJV)

Esau is considered a godless man who treated his birthright as the oldest son lightly. When he was cheated out of his father's blessing, he was rejected by Isaac. Why? He never truly repented. I chose to quote the King James Version of this passage because the KJV correctly renders μετανοίας (*metanoias*) as "repentance" instead of "change of mind" (NIV). He was remorseful as evidenced by his tears, but he was never truly repentant. Remorse can masquerade as repentance because it

looks broken. Remorse shows itself externally through tears and wailing like Esau. How do we know Esau was not repentant? He was never broken over his sinful attitudes that led him to sell his birthright. Like the lost son, he squandered his inheritance (his birthright as the firstborn son) and was left with nothing.

Conclusion

The purity of the Bride, the Church, is at stake. The world, the flesh, and the devil are conspiring to defile her and render her unclean. What can she do to fight back? She must submit herself afresh to God and take a stand for purity. She must resist the devil, the world, and the pull of the flesh. She cannot allow herself to accept the standards of the world for sexuality. She must repent for minimizing the Lord God's high and holy standards for sexuality as presented in the Bible. Only then will she be blessed and be a compelling witness to the watching world. May God use this book to help purify the Church, the Bride of His beloved Son.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

13 STRATEGIES PASTORS CAN USE TO PROTECT THEIR PURITY WHEN AWAY FROM HOME

1. When making the hotel reservation, ask the clerk to have the television removed from the room before you arrive. If the hotel is unwilling and there are no other options, ask the front desk to block all adult channels before arrival.
2. Pray and ask God for strength to stay pure every day while away.
3. Display a photo of spouse, children, and grandchildren on nightstand next to the bed.
4. Upon arrival, spiritually cleanse the room by applying the blood of Jesus Christ through prayer.
5. Call your spouse and purity partner (or accountability partner) every night.
6. Ask your purity platoon (or elder board) to call you nightly while you are away.
7. Ask co-workers, fellow students/conferees of same sex to join you for dinner each evening so you are not alone.
8. Locate nearest Starbucks coffee shop or other “safe” location to serve as your Step #4 in your Four-Step Fire Drill.
9. Spend time exercising, reading in the library, and, most of all, getting your work done.
10. Using a safe computer, e-mail your purity status report daily to your spouse and purity partner.

11. Ask your purity platoon (or elder board) to pray for you every day while you're away.
12. Avoid situations where sexual temptations abound and your inhibitions are compromised such as bars, clubs, movies, video stores, time alone with opposite sex, "bad company" (1 Cor. 15:33).
13. Share the room (and the expense) with a co-worker of the same sex.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE CHURCH COMPUTER, E-MAIL, PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANT (PDA), and CELL PHONE POLICIES

Designed to serve as a guardrail for your Internet usage

I. Church Computer

- A. Create and accept into official minutes an Official Statement of Policy regarding Internet use by employees.

This official statement of policy should include:

- a. Placement guidelines for computer screens.
- b. Commitment to use a recommended pornography blocking service.
- c. Guidelines for accountability among ministry workers using the Internet.
- d. Annual computer audits of the computer's hard drive.
- e. Annual or quarterly report to the leadership regarding items a-d above.
- f. Specific guidelines for laptop and home computers as well as church computers.

See the sample policy below.

Sample Statement of Policy Regarding Church Related Computers with Internet Access

This policy covers (where applicable) all computers that have Internet access and are used for church ministry. This includes computers at the church building, laptop computers, and computers in the home. Computers with Internet access are to be located and managed according to the following.

- 1) **Computer placement:** Computer screens are to be located in highly visible areas of the building. Computer screens in personal offices need to be visible from the office doorway. If the office does not have a window, consider modifying the door by adding a 4-inch-wide by 4-foot-high rectangular window cut into the door. If this is not feasible, the office

door is to remain open whenever the computer, for any reason, is being used.

- 2) **Blocking Service:** Every computer with Internet access is to have a blocking service. The password to this blocking service program is to be kept confidential and known only by a designated non-ministerial member of the leadership team. Churches that have their computer system networked are to have a firewall-type blocking service that is maintained by a non-ministerial member of the leadership team. If necessary, the leadership team may designate a person from the church membership with computer expertise to manage the church's security access to the blocking service.
- 3) **Accountability:** Every minister operating a computer with Internet access is required to subscribe to an Internet accountability service for all computers—home or church. An example of such a service is Covenant Eyes (www.covenanteyes.com). This service will report to your designated partner all Internet sites visited. (The church should consider budgeting for this service and providing it for staff.)
- 4) **Computer Audits:** All staff computers are subject to random inspection by the Information Technology (IT) Dept. or designated IT person. An annual audit of computer files should be performed by an independent computer technician.
- 5) **Reporting:** An annual report or quarterly updates are to be presented to the leadership team. This report is to identify:
 - a. The current number and location of church computers with Internet access.
 - b. The ministry workers who have Internet access from their home computers.
 - c. The frequency of accountability discussions among the ministry team.
- 6) **Note Regarding Home and Laptop Computers**
Home-based computers and portable computers with Internet

access and used for ministry work are to be managed according to the following guidelines.

- a. Regarding computer placement, blocking service, accountability, computer audits, and reporting, follow the same guidelines outlined for church-based computers (see points 1-5).
- b. The blocking service password is to be managed by the person designated in item #2.
- c. The home-based computer user agrees to avoid:
 - Using the Internet for periods longer than 60 minutes at a time.
 - Internet use after 10:00 p.m. or during late night hours.

II. E-mail

- A. Receipt of sexual or other inappropriate e-mails must be reported immediately to the Information Technology (IT) Dept. or IT person.
- B. All e-mails are subject to random inspection by the IT Dept. or person.

III. Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and Cell Phones

- A. All PDAs and cell phones with Internet access must have Internet Service Provider (ISP) filters and accountability software installed (Covenant Eyes).
- B. All staff PDAs and cell phones are subject to random inspection by the IT Dept. or designated IT person.

IV. General

- A. Online purchases must only be made on secure, well-established sites.
- B. Credit card or other confidential information must never be

transmitted through e-mail.

- C. Employees refusing to comply with these procedures are subject to discipline or dismissal.

Church Website

Publish the following on your church website:

How can you and your family enjoy a safe, clean, and secure computer environment? Here are some suggestions:

1. Protecting Your Household

- Use an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that provides filtered Internet service to screen out offensive words or pictures.
- Parents should not allow their children to go to a peer's home that is not safe regarding the computer and television. Interview the parents if necessary to see that they have a standard consistent with yours.
- Consider the position of the computer in your home:
 - Restrict the computer to public areas in the home such as the family room, living room, etc.
 - The computer monitor should be facing into the public areas and not facing a wall.
 - Do not allow children to have computers or televisions in their bedrooms.
- Consider access to your computer:
 - Parents should restrict usage of the computer to times when parents are home.

- Parent should provide strict guidelines for the use of the computer including:
 - When it is being used.
 - How long it is being used.
 - Where it will be used.
 - Who your child is communicating with via e-mail or chat rooms.
- Parents should periodically monitor the computer. Periodically check cookies, temporary Internet files, cache and history.
- Parents must monitor all media entering their home: Internet, television, music, video, radio, print. Parents are responsible for providing their children with a safe, porn-free environment.
- Parents should control computer use by having the password
- All computers should have an Internet accountability service such as Covenant Eyes. Accountability services provide an e-mail list of every website visited during a given period of time to accountability partner(s) you specify.
- Make online purchases only on secure, well-established sites.
- Do not send credit card or other confidential information through e-mail.
- For more information on keeping your online environment safe, visit “Safe Families.”

2. Protecting Your Children

- Get involved with your child’s online experience.
- Teach your children what to do and not to do online.

- Encourage them to not give out personal information such as address, phone, picture, etc.
- Set limits to their time online.
- Let your children know that they should not respond when they receive offensive or dangerous e-mails or other communications.
- Get involved in what interests your children in the online environment.
- Confirm that your children's schools have policies that restrict Internet access.
- Have regular family meetings in which the issue of computer safety is one of the topics.
- Educate your children via age-appropriate talks on sexuality. Make this an ongoing conversation with your children as they age, not a one-time event.

For a great overview of various family-friendly Internet services provided by the National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families. For more information, contact:

- National Coalition for Purity (www.puritycoalition.org)

Formal Sample Church Information Technology Policy

A. Network and Computer Use

The purpose of this policy is to outline the acceptable use of computer equipment at LOCAL CHURCH. These guidelines are in place to protect the employee and LOCAL CHURCH from illegal or damaging actions by individuals, either knowingly or unknowingly. Inappropriate computer/software use exposes LOCAL CHURCH to risks including virus attacks, compromise of network systems and services, and legal issues. Effective security is a team effort involving the participation and support of every employee and volunteer who deals with information and/or information systems. It is the responsibility of every user to know

these guidelines, and to conduct their activities accordingly. For purposes of the policies below, “electronic communications systems” encompass all forms of communication where technology is applied. This definition may include, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, news groups, and chat rooms/chat sessions. Also “Electronic communications systems” refers to the communications themselves that are sent via electronic sources (e.g. email messages). This policy applies to employees, contractors, consultants, temporary employees, volunteers and other workers at LOCAL CHURCH, including all personnel affiliated with third parties. This policy applies to all equipment that is owned or leased by LOCAL CHURCH and any use of a network account or email address provided by LOCAL CHURCH.

1. General Use and Ownership

- a) Network-related systems, including but not limited to computer equipment, software, operating systems, storage media, network accounts providing electronic mail, Internet connection and FTP, are the property of LOCAL CHURCH. These systems are to be used for business purposes in serving the interests of the organization, our congregation and the larger community in the course of normal operations.
- b) LOCAL CHURCH’s IT Department does not provide electronic privacy and may view anything at will. Users should be aware that the data they create on the corporate systems remains the property of LOCAL CHURCH.
- c) LOCAL CHURCH computers and network resources are provided for employees to utilize in the course of completing their work. Limited personal use may be allowed, but should not interfere with work performance or alter the operation of the computer system. All employees are responsible for exercising good judgment regarding reasonable personal use. Any personal use must follow the guidelines outlined in this policy. In general, employees may not use the Internet to view or visit websites containing pornography, tasteless or offensive material, gambling, or other material that is in conflict with LOCAL CHURCH values.
- d) LOCAL CHURCH has the right to monitor all aspects of its computer system, including, but not limited to, monitoring

location, time and duration of sites visited by employees on the Internet, monitoring chat groups and news groups, reviewing material downloaded or uploaded by employees to the Internet, and reviewing email sent and received by employees.

- e) LOCAL CHURCH uses automated software to monitor material created, stored, sent or received on its computers and networks. LOCAL CHURCH reserves the right to inspect files stored anywhere on its network including private areas in order to assure compliance with LOCAL CHURCH's policies, with or without notice to employees.

2. Security and Proprietary Information

- a) Information contained on network-related systems should be classified as either confidential or not confidential. Information marked as confidential should be secured in a directory with appropriate permissions. Owners or authors of files should review their files regularly to ensure proper restrictions are in place. The IT Department will create directories and set permissions upon request.
- b) All network account and passwords must be kept secure. Users may not share accounts or passwords with other employees, volunteers, family members or any other individual. Authorized users are responsible for the security of their passwords and accounts. User-level passwords should be changed every 180 days.
- c) All PCs, laptops and workstations should be secured by locking the desktop (windows key + L) when the computer is unattended and be shut down at the end of each workday.
- d) All computers connected to LOCAL CHURCH's network, whether owned by the employee or LOCAL CHURCH, shall continually execute approved virus-scanning software with a current virus database.
- e) Users should immediately delete unknown email with attachments (do not open as the email attachment may contain viruses).

3. Prohibited System and Network Activities

The following actions are prohibited:

- a) Revealing or allowing use of your network or passwords to volunteers, employees and family members.
- b) Installation of any copyrighted software for which LOCAL CHURCH does not have an active license onto any LOCAL CHURCH-owned computer without the permission of the IT Department.
- c) Attachment of peripheral hardware (e.g., routers, wireless access points, etc.) to the network or to the user's local computer without permission of the IT Department.
- d) Viewing or visiting websites that contain images or text of a pornographic or obscene nature. If an employee is connected accidentally to a site that contains sexually explicit or offensive materials, he or she must disconnect from the site immediately, regardless of whether that site has been previously deemed acceptable by any screening or rating program. The employee must immediately inform his or her supervisor or the IT Department of the contact with the site.
- e) Using a LOCAL CHURCH computing asset to actively engage in procuring or transmitting material that is in violation of sexual harassment or hostile workplace laws.
- f) Violations of the rights of any person or organization protected by copyright, trade secret, patent or other intellectual property, or similar laws or regulations, including the installation or distribution of pirated or other software products that are not appropriately licensed for use by LOCAL CHURCH is prohibited.
- g) Unauthorized use of copyrighted material including digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books or other copyrighted sources or copyrighted music. Information posted or viewed on the Internet may constitute published material. Therefore, reproduction of information posted or otherwise available over the Internet may be done only by express permission from the author or copyright holder.
- h) Circumventing user authentication or security of any computer, network or account.
- i) Effecting security breaches or disruptions of network communication. Security breaches include, but are not limited to, accessing data of which the user is not the intended recipient

or logging into a server or account that the user is not expressly authorized to access, unless these duties are within the scope of regular duties. For purposes of this section, disruption includes network sniffing, pinged floods, packet spoofing, denial of service, and forged routing information for malicious purposes. Port scanning or security scanning is expressly prohibited unless prior notification to the IT Department is made. Further, no employee may use LOCAL CHURCH's Internet facilities to knowingly disable or overload any computer system or network or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.

- j) Executing any form of network monitoring which will intercept data not intended for the employee's computer, unless this activity is a part of the employee's normal job.
- k) Interfering with or denying service to any user other than the employee's computer (e.g., denial of service attack).
- l) Using any program/script/command, or sending messages of any kind, with the intent to interfere with or disable, a user's terminal session, via any means, locally or via the network.

4. Prohibited Email and Communications Activities

The following actions are prohibited:

- a) Using LOCAL CHURCH's computer systems or distribution lists for dissemination of commercial or personal advertisements, solicitations, promotions, political material, unsolicited email messages or any other unauthorized use
- b) Any form of harassment via email, telephone or paging, whether through language, frequency or size of messages
- c) Unauthorized use, or forging, of email header information
- d) Solicitation of email for any other email address, other than that of the poster's account, with the intent to harass or to collect replies. (e.g. offering someone else's LOCAL CHURCH email address when ordering something online so that the resultant spam will come back to the other person)
- e) Creating or forwarding chain letters, Ponzi or other pyramid schemes of any type.

5. *Enforcement*

Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Any user not employed by LOCAL CHURCH (volunteers, contractors, etc.) found to have violated this policy may be barred from continued use of the LOCAL CHURCH network and any account provided to them for such use.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE PASTORAL COUNSELING POLICIES

I. Facility

- A. Glass inserts 4-inch-wide by 4-foot-high rectangular window shall be installed in the office doors of all pastors who do counseling.
- B. Furniture shall be situated in the pastor's office such that the parishioner is visible to those passing by.
- C. A "white noise" machine shall be utilized to maintain confidentiality of counseling.

II. Counseling

Boundary issues when counseling opposite sex parishioners:

- A. Male pastors shall not counsel women alone except in emergency situations. Women will be referred to a female counselor or an older female for counseling.
- B. Pastors shall not hug parishioners without permission during counseling sessions.
- C. Pastors shall not hold the hands of parishioners while praying during counseling sessions.
- D. Pastors shall not kiss parishioners during counseling session.
- E. Automatic referral of parishioners with sexual dysfunction issues to appropriate therapist of the same sex as the parishioner.
- F. No opposite gender counseling shall be conducted in evenings or when the pastor is the only one in the building.
- G. No counseling shall take place in the home of a parishioner
- H. Counseling will only be conducted during normal business hours.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE PASTOR-CONGREGATION POLICIES

I. **Personal Conduct**

- A. Pastors shall not hug opposite sex parishioners without permission.
- B. Pastors shall not hold the hands or touch any part of the body of opposite sex parishioners while praying.
- C. Pastors shall not kiss opposite sex parishioners.
- D. Pastors shall not dine alone with opposite sex parishioners.
- E. Married pastors shall protect their marriages by soliciting the input of their wives to protect them from opposite sex attractions and predators.

II. **Ministry Conduct**

- A. Pastors shall only conduct visitation in the homes of couples or single men. Women should visit in the homes of single women.
- B. Pastors (see Youth Pastor Protection Policy below) shall not provide transportation to opposite sex parishioners without accompaniment.
- C. Personal and ministry conduct policies are equally applicable on missions trips.

III. **Youth Pastor Protection Policy**

Include a policy in an operations manual governing youth ministry stating that a youth pastor must not provide transportation home to any lone teen. This is to safeguard the reputation of the youth pastor and to prevent the Satan from having any opportunity (1 Peter 5:8). Youth pastors, teens, and parents need to be made aware of the policy.

IV. Cohabitation Policy

Draft a pastoral policy regarding cohabitation which all pastors must affirm. Here is a sample of one church's policy:

- A. We believe the Bible teaches that physical sexual union is an essential and God-given part of marriage to follow rather than precede a permanent commitment made in public in the presence of God, family, and friends.
- B. Sexual union that precedes a public commitment is called fornication and is regarded as a sin against God, one's partner, and society (I Cor. 6:18; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5-6; I Thess. 4:3).
- C. This church will not give implicit approval to that which Scripture disapproves. A wedding will not be scheduled or performed by any pastor of this church if a couple is sleeping together or living together. This policy includes couples living together in proclaimed celibacy. The "appearance of evil" is prohibited likewise by Scripture (1 Thess. 5:22). The church and its pastors reserve the right to refuse to host or perform a wedding at any time, up to the time of the service itself, if this policy is found to have been violated in an unrepentant spirit.

V. Wedding Policy

Draft a pastoral policy regarding weddings which all pastors must affirm. Here is a sample of one church's policy:

- A. Weddings will be performed at the church and officiated by a pastor of the church when both groom and bride give testimony and evidence of a living and personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, are demonstrating a relationship of sexual purity, and where it is their purpose to seek and follow the pattern for marriage as set forth in God's Word (Ephesians 5:22-33).
- B. Scripture forbids the "unequal" bond of believer to unbeliever in marriage. Where both parties seeking marriage are not spiritually born again, a pastor may, at his discretion, perform the marriage at a location other than the church facilities. The pastor may choose to perform a ceremony

when he feels there is sufficient opportunity to minister to the glory of Jesus Christ. This decision will be made at the sole discretion of church and its ministry staff in consultation with the senior pastor and the elder board.

- C. Because we believe the Bible specifically calls homosexuality a sin and not “an alternate lifestyle,” neither the church nor its pastors will perform, bless, or approve marriages between people of the same sex (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Romans 1:18-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- D. Attendance in marriage preparation is a prerequisite to be married at the church. The marrying pastor may make an exception by supplying alternative marriage counseling.
- E. Marriage preparation does not guarantee the right to have the service at the church if the couple continues in the practice or appearance of fornication.
- F. A pastor of the church may respectfully refuse to marry any couple for reasons of his own personal conscience. Such reasons may include untreated chemical dependency, previous marriages, and other matters of discussion and conscience.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE ELDER BOARD POLICIES

I. Policies

- A. Elders need to develop a policy that addresses the issue of pastoral sexual abuse. The policy should include a clear statement of what constitutes sexual harassment.
- B. All staff pastors need to be instructed in the policy by the church attorney.

II. Background Reports

- A. If feasible, elder board should contract with an investigative agency to provide:
 1. Background reports of any criminal behavior or reported domestic violence for all new staff leadership hired.
 2. Background checks on new staff leadership should include calls to all previous churches served and the district superintendent.

III. Staff Screening

- A. All new staff shall be screened for sexual addiction using the resources provided in *The Power of Purity* by the author.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE STAFF RELATIONSHIP POLICIES

I. Staff Dating

- A. All staff dating relationships shall be made known to the senior pastor.
- B. Public displays of affection beyond the bounds of normal decorum are prohibited.

II. Staff Relationships

- A. Staff meetings and the staff environment shall be free from sexual abuse including sexually offensive language or humor.
- B. Sexual abuse or harassment of any staff member shall be immediately reported to the senior pastor. The senior pastor shall report such abuse to the board of elders and an action plan shall be formulated and implemented.

APPENDIX G

PROJECT PURITY INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Interviewer Name _____

Interview Date _____

1. Tell me about your thought life:

•Have you been thinking of any of the pornography you have viewed in the past? How have you dealt with that?

•Have you had any sexual fantasies or dreams lately? About whom? How did you deal with that?

2. Have you **ever** viewed any pornography? If so, when?

3. If you have viewed pornography within the past year, answer the following:

•What pornographic Internet websites have you visited lately? Name them for me if you can.

•What videos have you seen lately? Name them for me.

•What movies have you seen lately? Name them for me.

•What cable/satellite TV program have you seen lately? Name the programs for me.

•Have you viewed any pornographic magazines, comics lately? Name them for me.

•Have you looked through any women's clothing magazines, catalogs (Victoria's Secret, etc.) lately?

•Have you read any pornographic books lately? If so, name them for me.

•Have you downloaded any pornography from the Internet lately?

•What CD/tapes have you listened to lately? Name them for me.

•Have you ever been in a chat room to talk sexually with someone?

•Have you ever received any sexual or sexually solicitous e-mails? From whom?

4. Have you ever found any pornographic literature on the street? In a garbage can? Has it found you?

5. Have you been browsing the airport, hotel, drugstore, or any magazine racks looking for pornography?

•What covers of magazines were you staring at? Name them for me.

6. Have you **ever** been in an adult bookstore? When?

•Have you been in any adult video sections in any other stores lately?

7. Have you **ever** viewed pornography on cable television (HBO, Showtime, etc.)? When?

8. Have you **ever** engaged in telephone sex? When? Tell me about it.

9. Have you **ever** dialed a dial-a-porn telephone number?

10. Have you caught yourself looking at women's breasts, buttocks, genital areas lately? Tell me about it.

11. Have you **ever** engaged in any sexual behavior with anyone other than your wife? Tell me about it.
12. When did you last masturbate?
13. How often and where do you masturbate?
14. If married, have you **ever** consciously or unconsciously touched a woman other than your wife inappropriately? Tell me about it.
15. If married, have you told your wife of your struggles with pornography and made her a partner in your quest for purity?
16. On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “miserable” and 5 being “ecstatic,” how happily married are you? How would your wife respond to that same question?
17. If you traveled this past week and stayed overnight, what did you do to protect your sexual purity?
18. Have you **ever** solicited or permitted yourself to be solicited by a prostitute or a call girl?
19. Have you **ever** had incestuous relations with a family member?
20. While married, have you **ever** had sexual intercourse with someone other than your wife?
21. Have you made contact or been contacted by an ex-wife, girlfriend lately?

22. Have you **ever** engaged in any paraphilic (aberrant) sexual behavior (fetishes, exhibitionism, sado-masochism, bestiality, etc.)?
 - With your wife?
 - By yourself?
 - With someone else? Who? Tell me about it

23. Have you **ever** engaged in any sexual behavior with a partner of the same sex? Tell me about it

24. Have you **ever** attended a strip show? When?

25. Have you **ever** been to a massage parlor and received a sexual massage? When?

26. Have you ever engaged in sexual contact with an animal? When?

27. Do you have any sexual behaviors that you'd like to stop but seemingly cannot? What are they?

28. Do you have cable or satellite television at home?

29. Do you have erotica (statues, art work, figurines) in your home?

30. Have you **ever** been convicted of criminal sexual behavior?

31. Have you **ever** engaged in sexual contact with a minor (under the age of 18)? Who? When? Tell me about it

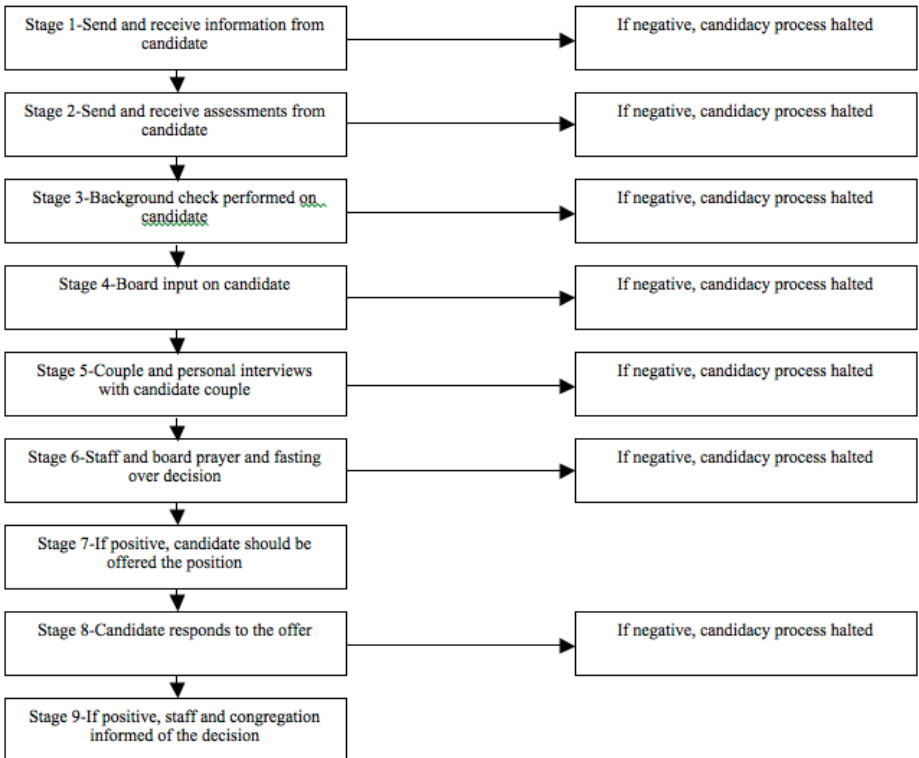
32. Have you **ever** engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct such that, if the other person brought it to light now or in the future, it could come back to haunt you and damage your ministry?

33. Would you like to revise any of your previous answers? Which one?

APPENDIX H

HIRING DECISION TREE

Better to do “due diligence” up-front in the hiring process than to have to discharge someone because he was hired hastily and was not a “good fit” for the pastoral staff. The Hiring Decision Tree is a practical strategy of due diligence in the hiring of pastoral staff. The hiring process, no matter how thorough, is not foolproof. But the Hiring Decision Tree can help to minimize the mistakes often made. Below is the Hiring Decision Tree and an explanation of each stage. The process can be halted at any stage by either party, so there is room for the Holy Spirit to lead.



Stage #1—Cover letter ministry application, ministry description, church/area history and background, stamped envelope sent by pastor to candidate with request for statement of faith, resume including references, and completed ministry application.

- Receive resume, statement of faith, and completed ministry application.
- Documents reviewed by pastor (or search committee).
- Follow-up letter to candidate: acknowledge receipt of documents and intent to pursue to the next stage or candidacy halted.

Stage #2—Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA) and Sexual Addiction Screening Test (SAST) should be sent with cover letter and stamped envelope.

- Receive, score, and analyze TJTA and SAST.
- Follow-up letter to candidate: acknowledge receipt of TJTA and SAST and intent to cover both in person with the candidate during personal interview. If 5 or more “white” zones on TJTA or if “13” or higher on the SAST, candidacy should be halted until candidate does personal therapeutic work.

Stage #3—Background check performed on candidate, including checking all resume references and checking for criminal or legal judgments.

- If concerns arise because of background check, concerns should be covered with the candidate during the personal interview.
- If concerns are serious, candidacy should be halted and the candidate notified by letter.

Stage #4—Pastor should present the information received from a qualified candidate he desires to pursue to the board of the church. The board has the right and responsibility to permit the pastor to pursue or halt the candidacy based on the information presented. The board should

be consulted for two reasons: because there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors (Prov. 15:22) and because, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, the board bears ultimate responsibility for the ministry including all hiring of staff.

Stage #5—With board approval, the candidate and his spouse (if married) should be invited to candidate for the position. Times should be scheduled for both a couple and personal interview(s).

Budgeted money should be used to cover transportation, housing, and meals for the candidate couple. The couple interview should be with the pastor and his wife (conjoint interview) over dinner. Why over dinner? It is a relaxed way to become acquainted with the candidate couple, gain information, and see how the couple relates to one another. Additionally, it is critical to have the pastor's wife's perspective and insights. She will see and hear things the pastor will miss.

During the personal interview, the pastor will want to cover the results of the candidate's TJTA, SAST, background check, and other documents received from the candidate. The pastor will also want to cover the salary and benefits package, chain of accountability, start date, and office location. If the amount of information to be covered is overwhelming, a second personal interview should be scheduled. The pastor will want to place more weight on character qualities than ministry competency, experience, or education. There is no substitute for godly character. If flawed in character, candidacy should be halted.

Stage #6—Once the couple and personal interviews have been completed, the pastor should report back to the board the results of both the couple and personal interviews. The next step is for the pastor and board to enter into a time of prayer and fasting before making the decision. The end result will be unanimity of pastor and board. For the sake of the candidate, this stage should follow closely and quickly on the heels of the interviews.

Stage #7—If the outcome of the prayer and fasting is positive, the candidate should be called and offered the position with a formal letter to

follow. A deadline for the decision by the candidate should be specified.

Stage #8—The candidate will respond to the offer. Either way, the pastor should encourage the candidate to provide his response in writing for inclusion in his personnel file.

Stage #9—If positive, current staff should be informed. Pastor should announce decision to the congregation. Candidate couple's photo and short bio should be published in the church newsletter and website.

APPENDIX I

PERSONAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions as thoughtfully as possible. You may leave any question blank if you believe the question does not pertain to your circumstances, or if you choose not to share that information at this time.

Today's Date _____

Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Telephone: Work (____) _____

Home (____) _____

Cell (____) _____

Email: Work _____

Home _____

Issues

What problem(s) do you want to overcome? _____

What do you think is causing this (these) problem(s)? _____

Health History

Have you ever received psychological or psychiatric treatment in the past? Please describe. _____

Have you been treated with antidepressants or other psychotropic medications? _____

Do you have any problems with abuse or dependency of alcohol or any chemical substances? If so, please describe. _____

Do you have any current medical problems or concerns? _____

What medicines do you currently take? What dosages? _____

Did you suffer from any past/childhood illnesses that still affect you today? _____

Family and Relationship History

With whom do you currently reside? _____

What is your marital status? _____

Do you have children? If so, list names and ages. _____

Briefly describe your marriage/relationship. _____

Have you had any particular problems with adult relationships with members of the opposite sex? _____

Do you have any difficulties with same sex friendships? _____

Briefly describe your family of origin. How would you describe your parents? Also describe your sibling relationships. _____

Please list any significant circumstances about your upbringing that may be related to your current problems. _____

Have you suffered any instances of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse as a child? Please explain. _____

Do any members of your family of origin, or extended relatives have problems with chemical abuse and/or alcoholism? _____

Have any biological family members been treated for any psychological disorders? _____

Do any biological family members take medications for emotional or mental disorders?

Educational and Job History

What is your highest educational degree earned? _____

Please describe any significant experiences related to your educational history. _____

Do you have future educational plans? _____

What is your current occupation? _____

Do you feel satisfied with your job? _____

Have you had any particular difficulties or problems related to your employment, in the past and/or currently? _____

Religious History

What is your religion? _____

What are your most important religious beliefs? _____

How do your religious beliefs influence the decisions you make in your life? _____

Have you made any important changes in your religious beliefs during your lifetime?

If married, do you and your spouse encounter relationship problems due to differences in your religious beliefs? _____

What church (if any) do you currently attend? _____

Personal Assessment

Describe some of your fears. _____

Describe faults you think you have. _____

Describe your good characteristics. _____

If you ever have any of the thoughts listed below, check the frequency of occurrence:

<u>Thought</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Hardly Ever</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Frequently</u>
Life is hopeless.	_____	_____	_____	_____
I am lonely.	_____	_____	_____	_____
The future is hopeless.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Nobody cares about me.	_____	_____	_____	_____
I feel like killing myself.	_____	_____	_____	_____
I am a failure.	_____	_____	_____	_____
I am intellectually inferior.	_____	_____	_____	_____
People usually don't like me.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I am going to faint. _____

I am going to panic. _____

Please check all problem areas that pertain to you:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| _____ Sadness | _____ Suicidal feelings | _____ Loss of energy |
| _____ Low self-esteem | _____ Isolation & loneliness | _____ Sleep disturbance |
| _____ Headaches | _____ Dizziness | _____ Angry feelings |
| _____ Mood swings | _____ Verbal abuse | _____ Emotional abuse |
| _____ Physical abuse | _____ Sexual abuse | _____ Financial problems |
| _____ Career problems | _____ Marital problems | _____ Relationship |
| _____ Parenting problems | _____ Anxiety | _____ Excessive worry |
| _____ Excessive fear | _____ Compulsive behaviors | _____ Sexual problems |
| _____ Eating problems | _____ Gambling problems | _____ Drug addictions |
| _____ Social problems | _____ Excessive guilt | _____ Communication |

If married, please answer “**Partner Issues in Marriage**”

Please add anything that will help me understand your problems.

Partner Issues in Marriage

What issues are hurting your marriage?

Mark all that apply. When done, go back through and look at the ones you have marked, place a “1” by the most prominent issue in your marriage.

- Abuse—physical, emotional, spiritual.
- Addiction—alcohol, medication, drugs, sex, food, work, relationships, gambling.
- Anger issues—triggered easily and often, explosive outbursts, violent or verbally abusive.
- Bisexuality—partner is bisexual.
- Bond has weakened—incompatibility, no sexual desire, no

- commonalties, no time together.
- Communication needs to be improved—communication is shallow or conflicted.
- Controlling—partner is controlling, perfectionist, rigid, inflexible, applies pressure to measure up.
- Criminal activity—partner was or is involved in criminal or illegal activity.
- Depression—partner is depressed or down more often than not, withdrawn, morose, negative, moody, no fun to be with, has no vision for the future.
- Disrespect of partner—verbal, physical, or sexual.
- Effeminate—partner is effeminate, cross-dresses, or has fetishes.
- Emotionally distant—cold, unfeeling, unreachable.
- Exhaustion—overworked, stressed, irritable, no time for fun.
- Failure to lead—husband unwilling/unable to lead in spiritual matters, decision-making, and discipline of children.
- Failure to submit to leadership—wife unwilling/unable to submit to leadership of husband.
- Fear—of rejection, violence, abandonment, loss.
- Grown apart—through work, different interests, lack of time together, neglect of relationship.
- Immaturity—partner responds immaturely to decision-making, responsibility, leadership, finances, or conflict.
- Incest—unlawful or inappropriate sexual behavior with children or other relatives.
- Interference by someone outside the marriage—parent, in-laws, old boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse, other.
- Lack of honesty—loss of integrity and respect because of lying and broken promises.
- Loss of fun—work and projects but no vacations, dates, light-hearted delight.
- Loss of intimacy—not emotionally, spiritually, physically one.
- Loss of love—no feelings of love left.
- Misuse of finances—lack of spending controls, indebtedness, financial bondage, bad credit rating, inability to pay bills, living beyond means.
- No feelings—don't care either way about partner.
- Parenting conflicts—disagreement over discipline of children.

- Passive-aggressive—partner is passive in conflict but uses sneaky tactics to get even or do his/her own agenda.
- Pornography—partner periodically or regularly views pornography.
- Rebellion—partner is rebellious toward authority.
- Secrets—hidden issues not revealed to partner.
- Sexual dissatisfaction—too infrequent, too frequent, dysfunctional.
- Threats—verbal intimidation.
- Trust needs to be rebuilt—no trust.
- Unequally yoked—partners are not matched spiritually; one is a Christian and the other is not.
- Unforgiveness—partner is unforgiving and bitter over past offenses.
- Other: _____

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APPENDIX J

HEALING SABBATICAL

Overview:

When a church discovers (either through the intentional or unintentional admission of the pastor) that the pastor has committed a sexual sin and is possibly sexually addicted, the church has a decision to make regarding the continuing ministry of the pastor. The church can: a) maintain the status quo by minimizing or rationalizing it, b) maintain the status quo with restrictive boundaries, c) terminate the employment of the pastor and provide no financial or therapeutic support, d) provide a healing sabbatical with financial and therapeutic support.

An evaluation of the options is as follows: a) Alternative *a* minimizes the impact of sin on the pastor, his family, and the congregation for the sake of not “rocking the boat.” God cannot bless this situation. b) Alternative *b* is little better than *a*. The problem has not been addressed; the pastor is simply restricted from certain dangerous ministries (pastoral counseling, visitation, etc.). Both alternatives *a* and *b* are too lenient and minimize the sinfulness of sin. The congregation is left uninformed and both are top-heavy in favor of the pastor at the expense of the congregation. c) Alternative *c* is necessary in situations where pastors have crossed the line into Category 4-5 behaviors and have committed non-criminal and criminal sexual behavior with others (see table for Project Purity). Some pastors need to be incarcerated. Some pastors need to be in a different profession. Some pastors are predators who prey on their flocks and are not shepherds who care for their flocks. Having said that, alternative *c* is too harsh a punishment for those who have committed Category 1-2 behaviors. It provides no financial or therapeutic support and favors the congregation at the expense of the pastor. d) The *healing sabbatical* is a balanced alternative for pastors who are sexually addicted. It meets the needs of the pastor by providing financial and therapeutic support for him and his family, yet protects the congregation by removing him from his duties, thus recognizing the sinfulness of sin and upholding the holiness of God. The eventual goal of a healing sabbatical is restoration of the pastor to ministry in the church.

Definition: A *healing sabbatical* is a specific period of time allocated by a congregation to a pastor struggling with sexual sin in order to permit

the pastor to concentrate on overcoming his sexual sin and gaining healing.

Boundaries: The healing sabbatical needs boundaries to be effective.

1. The healing sabbatical will only be offered to pastors whose sexual sin is limited to Category 3 behavior.

2. Project Purity will do all initial assessment for the denomination to determine if sexual addiction is present and the category (1-5) of behavior under which it fits.

3. The pastor must immediately step out of his position. He cannot be permitted to continue to minister to the church.

4. The congregation must be immediately informed. Recommendations for how this is best handled are: a) the congregation be sent a letter from the chairman of the board (timed to arrive to all on the same day), and b) a pulpit announcement made by the chairman of the board the following Sunday (see *8 below). The pulpit announcement should be identical to the letter without embellishment. Prayer for the pastor should be emphasized.

5. Pulpit supply must be provided by the denomination for the congregation for the Sunday the letter is read. An interim pastor will need to be secured by the congregation for the period of the healing sabbatical. The district superintendent can help in this process by recommending interim pastoral candidates.

6. A specific plan for the healing sabbatical must be put together by the board and presented to the pastor. The plan will need to include: financial provision for the pastor and his family, therapeutic provision for the pastor and his wife (if married), reestablishing pastoral ministry to the congregation, financial limits of the plan, the timetable of the plan, any legal ramifications, and the district assessment of the pastor at the conclusion of the healing sabbatical for possible future ministry.

Table for Project Purity

A Plan for Dealing with Clergy Sexual Sin⁶²

Category (descriptive, not technical)	1	2	3	4	5
Description of behavior	Individual struggle only; no involvement with another person	Impersonal involvement with another person	Addictive sexual behavior in categories 1 or 2	Personal involvement with another individual	Criminal sexual behavior
Examples of behavior (not exhaustive)	Pornography Fantasy Masturbation	Anonymous Internet chat rooms Anonymous phone sex	Individual or impersonal sexual behavior pursued addictively	Prostitution Adultery	Rape Child molestation Incest Voyeurism Exhibitionism
Recommended consequences for behavior	Pastor privately confidentially pursues purity through Every Man's Battle For Purity	Pastor privately confidentially pursues purity through Every Man's Battle For Purity	District superintendent and church informed. Healing sabbatical provided. Removal from pastorate for one year while pastor pursues purity. Re-evaluation after one year.	District superintendent and church informed. Removal from pastorate and relocated to a city and church with a restoration ministry	District superintendent and church informed. Removal from pastorate and authorities contacted (police, child protective services)

Practicals:

1. The pastor will need assessment for sexual addiction both before and after therapy to determine if progress has been made. This will be done for the denomination by Project Purity.
2. The pastor will need to be held accountable to the therapeutic plan. The best plan is to require him to enroll in Every Man's Battle For Purity. He will receive high accountability and be called to deep repentance.
3. The pastor and his wife will need marital counseling for the damage done to their relationship. This needs to be a requirement and is non-optional. Wherever sexual sin has been permitted in a marriage, damage

has been done to the marriage. Counseling expenses should be paid by the pastor.

4. The pastor and board will need to determine where the pastor will worship during the sabbatical. It may not be possible for him to worship with the congregation.

5. Financial responsibilities:

a. In return for being retained on full salary and benefits, the pastor pays for all therapeutic help including Every Man's Battle For Purity, marital counseling, and personal counseling (possibly covered by health insurance).

b. Church pays for salary and benefits of the pastor, pulpit supply and interim pastor for the time period of the healing sabbatical.

c. The denomination (or district) covers the cost of Project Purity assessments.

6. Role of the denomination. The denomination shepherds the church through the process by assisting the board of the congregation in the development of the healing sabbatical plan, provides pulpit supply, recommends interim pastoral candidates, and assesses the pastor for resumption of ministry.

7. Role of Project Purity. Project Purity will do all assessments of pastors referred to them. They will assess for sexual addiction both before and after therapy (Every Man's Battle For Purity), assess for category of behavior (1-5), assess for marital health, provide marital counseling referral, and provide the denomination with a confidential written report on all assessments and referrals made.

8. Content of the letter and the pulpit announcement should include:

a. The pastor will not be preaching for _____ (period of time)

b. The pastor (or board) has asked for a healing sabbatical to deal with personal issues in his life.

c. The board has voted to extend a healing sabbatical to the pastor for the next _____ (period of time).

d. The pastor and his family will continue to be provided both salary and benefits at his current level of compensation.

e. Pray for the pastor and his family during this time of healing.

9. The healing sabbatical plan should include a resumption of ministry strategy. This strategy will include: denomination assessment results provided to the board, timetable for resumption of ministry, boundaries to protect the pastor from future sin, confession of sin to the congregation (where needed), and on-going accountability.

Goals:

The goals of the healing sabbatical are:

1. A repentant, healed, and restored pastor and wife.
2. A congregation protected from sin and shown how to deal with pastoral sin constructively.
3. Reclamation by the denomination of fallen pastor.

APPENDIX K

ANNOTATED LIST OF INTERNET RESOURCES

ON CHURCH PURITY

I. www.churchpurity.com

Provides practical tools and suggestions for helping the church become sexually pure, including a church purity weekend and a church purity retreat. Pastors can take a confidential, online Sexual Addiction Screening Test to check their own sexual purity.

II. www.kybaptist.org

Has a wealth of resources on sexual purity for churches and denominations. Their “Safe Church Initiative” features a variety of resolutions, articles, downloadable forms and policies, audiovisual resources, links to sites that provide background checks for churches, and links to Southern Baptist Convention websites.

III. www.churchadminpro.com

This website includes a staggering number of church and administrative policies on all kinds of topics. Pertinent to the issue of sexuality are the policies on child/youth protection, child molestation, Internet policy, pastoral counseling, sex offender attendance, and sexual harassment.

IV. www.xpastor.org

Website of Pastor David Fletcher with a wide range of policies drawn from the churches of a number of evangelical denominations. Included in the mix of policies are some well-conceived policies on sexuality.

APPENDIX L

A PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR A LOCAL CHURCH MEN'S PURITY MINISTRY

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4

Every Man's Battle For Purity Ministry

The Nature of a Men's Purity Ministry

What is a men's purity ministry in a local church, why is it unique, and how effective is it in helping men to change? A men's purity ministry in a local church is unique among the treatment options currently employed to help the church become sexually pure.

Overview of a Men's Purity Ministry

A men's sexual purity ministry is built on the foundation that sexual purity requires a partnership between God and people. There is a part that only God can play and a part that only people can play. Only God can change a heart. Only humans can take their thoughts captive, burn pornographic magazines, and choose to discipline their lives. It is a holy partnership between God and His people.

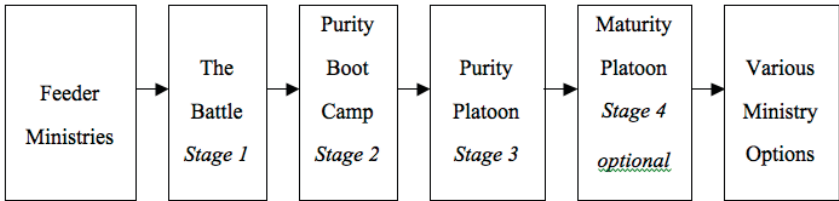
What are the components of a men's purity ministry, and why are they necessary for change to occur? Every Man's Battle For Purity is a three-stage strategy for helping Christian men to become more sexually

pure (Figure 3). Men come to Every Man's Battle For Purity from a variety of paths including: (a) men referred by pastors, area Christian counselors, wives, employers, (b) men's Bible study groups, (c) other churches, (d) self-referral because of curiosity about sexuality, and (e) other ministries within the church such as assessment and referral counseling, marriage coaching, and marriage preparation class.

Stage one is The Battle. Stage two is Purity Boot Camp. Stage three is Purity Platoon. Stage four is Maturity Platoon which is optional. Following Maturity Platoon, various options are open to men including: (a) Veteran's Platoon, for men who have been through all four stages of Every Man's Battle For Purity and desire the ongoing accountability of a platoon, (b) Fresh Start Marriage Retreat, for married men and their wives, (c) men's ministry, (d) individual therapy, (e) marriage counseling, and (f) church ministries.

Figure 3

Every Man's Battle For Purity—A Four-Stage Strategy

*Target Audience of Every Man's Battle For Purity*

The target audience for Every Man's Battle For Purity is Christian men. God does not call the unsaved to be holy. He calls the unsaved to repent and be saved—and calls Christians to be holy. First Peter 1:15, 16 says, “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” The context for these verses is found in 1 Peter 1:8, 14 and clearly indicates that this command is given to those who love Christ and are God's obedient children. The goal of Every Man's Battle For Purity is to purify the Bride of Christ, namely Christians.

Are unsaved men who desire to attend The Battle turned away? No, never! At the conclusion of The Battle men are invited to pray with a chaplain. If a man indicates that he is unsure of his relationship to Jesus Christ, he is given an opportunity to pray and enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The chaplain leads him through *Steps to Peace with God*, published by the Billy Graham Evangelistic

Association. Many men have prayed in this manner to receive Christ as Savior.

Scope of Every Man's Battle For Purity

Every Man's Battle For Purity is designed to be a "big-tent" inclusive ministry that seeks to draw into its ranks all Christian men who are sexually tempted or have fallen into sexual sin. The scope of the ministry is intentionally broad to reach as many men as possible. Sexual temptation and sexual sin is *every* man's battle. It is not a ministry primarily targeting the sexually addicted.

Because it is inclusive by design, Every Man's Battle For Purity will not sufficiently meet the needs of every man. There will always be men with sexual issues that are more complex and resistant to change than a generalized ministry can reach. Since its inception in 2002, statistical analysis indicates that Every Man's Battle For Purity has helped 91% of those who participate in the first three stages to become significantly more sexually pure. That means it has not helped a small percentage of those enlisting to change significantly. Some men who are in bondage to sexual sin will need more than the ministry can provide. Every Man's Battle For Purity will not diminish the need for therapists who specialize in treating the sexually addicted, out-patient clinics for the sexually addicted, or residential treatment centers. But it can be a valuable component in an overall treatment strategy for those men.

Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Goal of Every Man's Battle For Purity

The purpose of Every Man's Battle For Purity is to make sexual purity an unavoidable issue for the Church of Jesus Christ. The mission is that through Every Man's Battle For Purity men will repent of their sexual sins, find forgiveness at the cross of Christ, become free through the power of the Holy Spirit, and turn what Satan meant for evil into a ministry that glorifies God (Gen. 50:20). The vision of Every Man's Battle For Purity is to purify the Bride of Christ one local church at a time. To fulfill that vision, Every Man's Battle For Purity employs a three-stage strategy.

Stage One: The Battle

The first stage of Every Man's Battle For Purity is called The Battle. The Battle is a large catalytic event conducted in a local church called a Command Center Church. There is safety and anonymity in a large group, as men do not feel alone or as though they are the only ones with this problem. The Battle is meant to be an outreach to Christian men in the community regardless of church affiliation. Command Center Churches that host The Battle are encouraged to be Kingdom-builders who refuse to allow denominational bias to prevent them from purifying the Bride of Christ.

The goal of The Battle is to call men to make a decision to live in sexual purity. Do men become more sexually pure at The Battle? No. They do not know how to become more sexually pure yet. The Battle is

designed to motivate men, sound the alarm, and call men to take a stand for purity in their lives.

Purposes of The Battle

Why go to all the expense and effort to undertake a massive event like The Battle? The Battle accomplishes three major purposes for men: (a) It provides a safe environment for men to address the issue of sexual purity. There is safety in numbers, as men begin to realize they have believed a lie that *they are the only ones* struggling with sexual sin. When they see hundreds of men attending The Battle, they understand they are not alone. (b) The challenges and testimonies help men see that it is a lie to believe that their sexual sin is “normal” and acceptable. (c) Finally, The Battle generates excitement, *esprit de corps*, and is a catalytic event to launch men on to the more important stages to come. It is like the first hill on a roller coaster ride. The first hill is steep and scary, but it provides momentum for the rest of the ride. Men who attend The Battle are fearful to come to a meeting and face the issue of sexuality, not knowing what will be asked or expected. The Battle provides the needed motivation to continue on in the ministry. Like the roller coaster, there are ups and downs on the road to purity.

Promotion of The Battle

The Battle is promoted in a variety of ways. Colorful bulletin inserts, posters, and promotional DVDs are distributed to area churches. Radio spots are recorded and broadcast on local Christian radio stations.

Articles are published in local Christian newspapers and public service announcements describing The Battle are sent to other media outlets in the community. The Battle is promoted on both the church website and on the NCFP website. Using a zip code mailing, churches have the option of sending a colorful postcard to every congregation within a ten-mile radius of the Command Center Church. NCFP representatives also actively schedule appointments to personally meet and speak to the pastors of key churches in the Command Center Church's community, with the goal of soliciting partnerships.

The Command Center Church is encouraged to hold a men's event in the form of a men's breakfast, pizza party, or cookout to promote the event to men in the community. Additionally, sanitized testimonies are shared during the worship services and the pastor is encouraged to preach on sexual purity. Men are encouraged to contact their friends, relatives, sons, and work associates and invite them to The Battle.

Preparation for The Battle

Preparation for The Battle features a freestanding cross atop a hill made of hay bales and covered in camouflage netting, positioned on the platform. This is called "purity hill." Buckets filled with white flags mounted on dowel rods surround the platform. The white flags are the universal military symbol of surrender—a fitting symbol for men to use in surrendering themselves afresh to God. Chaplains are positioned around the platform and are trained to respond to men who come forward

at the invitation to take a stand for purity. As men arrive, they receive a battle kit consisting of a dog tag and chain, a camouflage Bible, a camouflage pen, and a field manual. Men are also handed a Women of Truth brochure describing the purity ministry for wives.

Program for The Battle

The Battle is a half-day event on a Saturday morning. It features live praise music and drama, video clips, testimonials from men who are living sexually pure lives, challenges from pastors and leaders, canteen time, and a call to respond. It is fast-paced and geared for men. During The Battle men are asked to commit themselves to Purity Boot Camp, the second of the three stages of Every Man's Battle For Purity. Men are told the location of the boot camps and are exhorted to view this as a mandatory step to becoming pure. Men are also informed of the Women of Truth Ministry and encouraged to share the Women of Truth brochure with their wives. Men are encouraged to be sensitive to whether or not their wives are ready for the Women of Truth ministry.

The music is a powerful component of The Battle, "setting the table" for all who come. Song selection is critical as they need to be well known and connect with men. The video film clips illustrate key concepts in the battle for purity, such as the importance of a transcendent cause worth living and dying for, the value of a team, and the necessity of confession. Men with strong testimonies are tapped to share transparently what God has done in their lives. Pastors and guest experts present the

challenges at The Battle. They describe who the enemy is, how he wages war, who is in our army, the weapons of war, and the strategy for victory. Knowing that “an army travels on its stomach,” canteen time provides men with food and beverages.

At the conclusion of The Battle, men are given a call to arms, meaning an invitation is given for men to take action on what they have heard by signing a covenant card, coming forward to pray with a chaplain to confess their sins, and planting a white flag of surrender on purity hill. Praying with a chaplain is an important part of the process because it fulfills the biblical exhortation to “confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (Jas. 5:16). Planting the white flag of surrender allows a man to physically act on his decision to take a stand for purity in his life.

Stage Two: Purity Boot Camp

Purity Boot Camp is the second of three stages comprising Every Man’s Battle For Purity. The Purity Boot Camp helps men count the cost of sexual purity. Purity Boot Camps are often held in multiple locations and run for one week from 6:00 - 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., beginning the Monday after The Battle. Do men become more sexually pure during Purity Boot Camp? No. They are learning to count the cost of purity. Men also learn about brain chemistry and its role in keeping them in bondage to sexual sin. They learn many other things, including

how to repent, how to treat and view women, initial steps to repairing their marriages, the necessity of personal and group accountability, and the value of a Purity Platoon.

Purposes of Purity Boot Camp

Purity Boot Camp accomplishes several important things in moving a man toward sexual purity: (a) It helps him count the cost of sexual purity. Purity Boot Camp helps a man understand what sexual immorality has cost him physically in terms of diseases and possible pregnancies; emotionally in guilt, shame, and hypocrisy; spiritually in estrangement from God; relationally in lack of intimacy with his wife and children, and the inability to view women in a godly way. He also faces what it may have cost him financially and vocationally. (b) It is a transitional vehicle for preparing a man to enter a small group. The leap from a large group of hundreds of men where there was safety in numbers to a small group of 12 men is fearful and threatening to most men. Purity Boot Camp provides sufficient safety in numbers, yet calls men to go deeper by choosing a purity partner and beginning preparation for entering a Purity Platoon. (c) Purity Boot Camp uses the military theme to call men to become disciplined in their lives. The military is built on principles of structure, sacrifice, courage, integrity, discipline, organization, chain of command, and respect for authority. Sexual sinners lead lives that are undisciplined and often chaotic. These men desperately need the structure and discipline found in military principles and used

effectively by Every Man's Battle For Purity.

Preparation for Purity Boot Camp

As mentioned, Purity Boot Camp is held from 6:00 -7:30 a.m. or 6:00 -7:30 p.m. for five days immediately on the heels of The Battle. It capitalizes on the momentum begun at The Battle. Led by two Purity Boot Camp lieutenants, a team arrives at 5:00 a.m. or 5:00 p.m. to open doors of the church, affix directional signs, brew coffee, set up tables and chairs, activate the sound system and lighting, and connect the computer and projector to show the Purity Boot Camp Powerpoint presentation. When men arrive, they are greeted and sent to registration to pay their fees, and then given name badges and a Purity Boot Camp kit consisting of a Purity Boot Camp Marching Orders manual and a supplemental text.

Purity Boot Camp Discipline

Men who arrive after 6:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. are asked by the lieutenant to apologize to the men in the boot camp for arriving late. Men are given grace until 6:10 a.m. and 6:10 p.m., at which time the doors are locked and late-arrivers are sent home. Men are instructed to wear the dog tags they received at The Battle every day until they have achieved six months of sexual purity, which is defined as a zero-tolerance for pornography in any form, masturbation, and sexual fantasizing. Men who forget to wear their dog tags are sent home to get them and return to boot camp. Roll call is taken each session, and rather than answering "present, here, or yes," men are instructed to respond, "Yo!" Men respond well to

concrete instructions.

Purity Boot Camp Leadership

Lieutenants are assigned to Purity Boot Camps by the pastor or point man. Co-lieutenants typically alternate days in leading Purity Boot Camp. Each troop enlisted in Purity Boot Camp is issued a copy of *Purity Boot Camp Marching Orders—Troop’s Edition* upon arrival on Monday. Each lieutenant is issued a copy of *Purity Boot Camp Marching Orders—Lieutenant’s Edition* during lieutenant’s training. The curriculum, *Purity Boot Camp Marching Orders—Troop’s and Lieutenant’s Editions* and the supplemental text are provided by the National Coalition For Purity to churches for distribution to men who enlist.

Purity Boot Camp Structure

Following roll call, men are taught a variety of sexual purity topics. Men are asked to memorize Bible verses as part of their homework each day. Men also choose a purity partner to call daily for accountability. One of the homework assignments given on Monday and Tuesday is for the men to write out their sexual histories, which they read to their purity partners on Wednesday. Regarding the sexual history, Schaumburg writes,

I am convinced that all people, men and women, sex addicts or not, need to be aware of what they bring into

relationships in terms of who they are sexually. One way to develop this awareness is to write your sexual history. If you are diligent in writing your history, you will transcend any denial you may be holding on to regarding how you think about sex, act out your sexuality, and affect other people as a sexual and relational being.⁶³

Sexual histories permit men to chronicle every sexual experience done by them or to them as the Lord brings those memories to their minds. Sexual histories are divided into decades. Under the safety of the confidentiality of the covenant, men are asked to read their sexual histories to their purity partners. Once read, men shred their sexual histories in shredders positioned at the foot of a freestanding cross. It is a powerful and liberating experience.

On Friday of Purity Boot Camp, men are invited to enlist in a Purity Platoon (stage three). A menu listing days, times, and locations of platoons is distributed. Purity Platoons begin the week immediately following Purity Boot Camp. Finally, men who have faithfully attended boot camp are presented with a graduation reward.

Stage Three: Purity Platoon

Purity Platoon is the third stage. It follows on the heels of Purity

63 Schaumburg, p. 77.

Boot Camp and features a small group of men ranging in number from six to fifteen. Purity Platoons are led by two trained sergeants who have met the seven requirements to qualify as sergeants. Purity Platoons meet weekly for 16 weeks. Experiments with longer and shorter durations have been tried but field testing has shown that men begin to trust and bond most effectively over the course of 16 weeks.

Purposes of Purity Platoon

The Purity Platoon is the vehicle for training men to become sexual pure for a lifetime. In the safety and support of a small group, men begin to develop intimacy and trust. For many, this is the first time in their lives they have experienced either intimacy or trust with other men.

Purity Platoon serves a number of purposes: (a) to equip men with the cognitive, behavioral, spiritual, and relational tools to become more sexually pure; (b) to help men build real relationships with one another based on trust, respect, and acceptance; (c) to enable men to reflect the holiness that God expects of them and to glorify Him with their lives; (d) to train every married man in the platoon to become a more effective husband to his wife; (e) to challenge every man in the platoon to go beyond external change to a change of heart (true freedom), and (f) to prepare every man in the platoon to become a leader-in-training with a potential goal of leading a Purity Platoon in the future. This last goal takes the very weakness that Satan meant for evil in their lives and turns it into a strength to benefit God's people as a ministry (Gen. 50:20).

Preparation for Purity Platoon

Two trained sergeants lead each Purity Platoon, which usually meets in churches. Prior to the first meeting of the platoon, sergeants pray for every man in the platoon and call each one to answer questions and provide directions to the church. Every man in the platoon is required to have a Purity Platoon kit and his dog tag. Men who have lost dog tags, manuals, or texts are asked to pay for replacements. This helps them become more responsible and realize there are consequences for their actions.

Directional signs are posted around the church. For platoons meeting early morning, sergeants are encouraged to brew coffee. Men are expected to bring Bibles, dog tags, and Purity Platoon kits. Both the *Purity Platoon Battle Plans—Troop's Edition* manual and supplemental text contained in the Purity Platoon kit are supplied by the National Coalition For Purity.

Purity Platoon Discipline

Just as in Purity Boot Camp, men are expected to arrive on time to platoon wearing their dog tags. Consequences for failure to do either are the same as in boot camp. In the first week, men read, sign, and receive a Purity Platoon covenant. Strict adherence to the covenant is critical. The platoon must deal with men who fail to abide by the covenant.

For men who have learning difficulties and thus fail to keep up

with reading in the text, memorizing the Bible passages, or completing the assignments, the help of a purity partner or another man in the platoon may be needed. For men who are resistant to abiding by the covenant requirements to cleanse the hard drive on their computers and install accountability software on their computers, the platoon may have to take a strong stand. The platoon may have to privately or publicly confront such men. In some cases, sergeants have led platoons in an intervention to rescue men who had been overtaken in sexual sins and cannot rescue themselves. Although sergeants lead the platoon, discipline needs to be done by the entire platoon so that every man is part of the decision and all will understand the even-handedness of the discipline. Men in a Purity Platoon are not permitted to be passive spectators in the process of sexual purity.

Purity Platoon Leadership

All Purity Platoons are led by two sergeants. Each sergeant has met the seven requirements to be a sergeant, has been trained in small group dynamics as well as the unique dimensions of a Purity Platoon, and most have been part of a Purity Platoon in the past. Two sergeants are assigned to each Purity Platoon to serve as each other's purity partner and to strengthen each other in their leadership (cf. Eccl. 4:9-12). It is unwise to pair a sergeant with a troop in the platoon because of the power differential. Knowing that there is a fear on the part of the troop to ask the hard, penetrating, accountability questions that need to be asked of

his sergeant, two sergeants are paired together as purity partners.

Purity Platoon Structure

As sergeants lead the platoon they are always evaluating the character and ability of their troops to identify those with spiritual gifts of leadership and teaching (cf. Rom. 12:7, 8). Those who have abilities in leadership and teaching and who meet the requirements to become sergeants are recommended by the platoon sergeants to the purity ministry point man for future training. The structure of the Purity Platoon involves four elements:

1. *Accountability.* Each troop in the platoon is held accountable in six ways: (a) daily check-ins and prayer with his purity partner, (b) platoon roll call to document his attendance, (c) weekly platoon inspection of “housekeeping items” such as wearing dog tags, installing an ISP (Internet service provider) filter, accountability software, etc., (d) check-in with purity partner during platoon meeting to recite memory verses and answer accountability questions, (e) weekly platoon discussion on homework assigned from manual and reading in supplemental text, and (f) platoon check-in in which every man shares with the platoon regarding his purity and his prayer needs. Regarding the latter, men are asked to

share about the purity of their walk with the entire platoon because it is more difficult to lie to a group than to an individual.

2. Teaching. Whether teaching material in the Purity Platoon Battle Plans—Troop’s Edition or from the reading, part of the platoon time is spent in teaching. A wide range of topics pertaining to sexuality is taught, including the causes, characteristics, consequences, and cure for sexual immorality, as well as practical physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational interventions.
3. Confession. Each week one man is given the opportunity to share his story with the platoon. No man is forced to share. Those sharing are cautioned to avoid graphic details lest their stories begin to trigger sexual fantasies in others in the platoon. At the conclusion of each man’s testimony, the platoon applauds his honesty, asks gentle, clarifying questions of him, and prays for him. The confession part of the platoon meeting is in obedience to James 5:16, “Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

4. Prayer. The sergeant invites men in the platoon to share their prayer needs and answers. Men write those requests in their manuals and pray for each other at the conclusion of the platoon meeting as well as during the week.

Purity Platoon Awards Breakfast

After 16 weeks of Purity Platoon, an awards breakfast is held to recognize and celebrate all that God has done in the lives of men in the platoons. The breakfast program features music, testimonies from men, video clips, an inspirational talk, the presentation of the coveted purity medallion, and a platoon photograph. An open microphone time is built into the program for men to share their stories of God's grace and mercy toward them. The emcee for the breakfast regulates the testimony time.

The purity medallion is a specially minted medallion that is the same color, shape, and size as a military special force's medallion. It is awarded to all men in platoons who have kept the platoon covenant. Purity medallions are provided by the National Coalition For Purity to Command Center Churches. The platoon photograph is usually taken at the Command Center Church, but can be taken at a local military installation in front of a piece of military hardware such as a tank, jet aircraft, or helicopter. For a church that meets the requirements for induction into the Order of the Purity of the Bride, it is awarded the United States Marine Corps officer's Mameluke sword. The church is

chosen for induction because its pastor and leaders own the vision of purifying the Bride of Christ, one church at a time.

Purity Platoon Sergeant's Briefing

Finally, because of the strategic importance of Purity Platoon sergeants to the ministry, at least one sergeant's briefing is held. A sergeant's briefing is the opportunity for sergeants to discuss platoon issues (respecting the confidentiality of their men), receive instruction, hear updates on the direction of the ministry, learn of upcoming events, and pray for one another and their men.

Stage Four: Maturity Platoon

Maturity Platoon is an optional fourth stage. The Maturity Platoon is a continuation of the Purity Platoon with the same men in attendance, meeting in the same location, at the same time and day. Maturity Platoons became a necessary option to the purity ministry when it was discovered that men in Purity Platoons had entered into community with one another and begun to taste intimacy. They had shared the most vulnerable area of their lives and had bonded, not wanting that bond to be broken by disbanding. The Maturity Platoon kit includes the *Maturity Platoon Combat Training Manual—Troop's and Sergeant's Editions* and a supplemental text. Kits are provided to Command Center Churches by the National Coalition For Purity. Maturity Platoon meets for 12 weeks. The curriculum covers three critical areas of men's lives: (a) how to be a godly man in six areas:

toward God, men, women (other than wives), job, finances and possessions, and the church; (b) how to be a godly husband through sacrificing, sanctifying, loving, leading, providing for, and protecting his wife; and (c) how to be a godly father through blessing, training, and instructing his children.

Goal and Purposes of Maturity Platoon

The goal of the Maturity Platoon is to help every man become a more mature, fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. The purposes of the Maturity Platoon are for: (a) every man in the platoon to become more knowledgeable of the Bible, (b) every man in the platoon to become more devoted to prayer, (c) every man in the platoon to become a better worshiper of God, (d) every married man in the platoon to become a better husband, and (e) every man in the platoon with children to become a better father.

The Maturity Platoon differs from the Purity Platoon in two ways: (a) it emphasizes growth in spiritual maturity instead of sexual purity, and (b) it differs in intent, being primarily a vehicle to transition men into other ministries in the local church as opposed to a vehicle for equipping men to become more sexually pure.

Preparation for Maturity Platoon

The preparation for Maturity Platoon is identical to the preparation for Purity Platoon, only the focus has changed. Sergeants and men in the Maturity Platoon purchase Maturity Platoon kits consisting

of *Maturity Platoon Combat Training Manual—Sergeant's and Troop's Editions* and a supplemental text.

Maturity Platoon Leadership

Sergeants provide initial leadership for the Maturity Platoon, but permit men in the platoon to share leadership over the 12 weeks. This is on-the-job (OJT) training of leaders and provides valuable insight into each man's faithfulness, giftedness, and motivation.

Maturity Platoon Structure

In the Maturity Platoon, men sign a new covenant with one another, agreeing to meet together faithfully for 12 weeks, hold each other accountable for homework, keep information shared in the platoon confidential, and remain sexually pure. Like the Purity Platoon, the Maturity Platoon provides the same basic four elements of structure: (a) accountability, (b) teaching, (c) confession, and (d) prayer. Instead of confession of sexual history, every man in the Maturity Platoon is given the opportunity to honestly share how he is doing in numerous areas: (a) his sexual purity, (b) his spiritual life, (c) his marriage, (d) his fathering, (e) his health, (f) his finances, and (g) his job. Every man shares prayer requests with the platoon.

Practical assignments in the Maturity Platoon include: (a) being baptized, (b) committing to church membership, (c) writing out one's testimony of salvation as a witnessing tool, (d) putting together a financial spending plan, (e) taking a spiritual gifts inventory and

discovering one's ministry, (f) beginning personal devotions with the Lord, (g) praying for wives and children every day, (h) looking for a faithful man to disciple, (i) blessing one's children, and (j) discipling sons.

The Uniqueness of Every Man's Battle For Purity

Every Man's Battle For Purity is unique in that it is built on both the parachurch and local church approaches to helping men become more sexually pure. It owes a debt of gratitude to each. What else makes it a unique sexual purity ministry to men?

It is unique in purpose

The purpose of Every Man's Battle For Purity is to make sexual purity an unavoidable issue for the Church of Jesus Christ. The church has long avoided the issue of sexual purity—and Every Man's Battle For Purity seeks to rectify that by making sexual purity unavoidable through the “permeation principle.” The permeation principle is based upon 1 Cor. 5:6: “Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?” Just as the influence of one sexually immoral person, if left unchecked, can permeate an entire church to leaven it with evil (see 1 Cor. 5:1, 2), so the influence of sexual purity can positively permeate a church by leavening it with righteousness.

How does the permeation principle of sexual purity work? God uses the Every Man's Battle For Purity strategy to help men in congregations to become more sexually pure. Like leaven, these men

are sown back into their congregations and begin to permeate those congregations by living lives of purity and righteousness. Congregations and pastors are forced to face the issue of sexual purity as they are challenged by the newfound passion of these changed men.

Mark Bergin writes, “The church is the most equipped organization on earth to deal with this issue. The biggest problem is getting pastors to take it on.”⁶⁴ Quoting Mark Laaser, Bergin writes, “Mr. Laaser warns that any church lacking honest confessions of Internet pornography addiction has a problem on its hands. Whether an open and exposed mess or a hidden and destructive beast, the problem exists in every church. No news is bad news.”⁶⁵

It is unique in approach.

Every Man’s Battle For Purity is unique in its approach to helping men become more sexually pure in 15 ways:

1. It is birthed and based in the local church and led by pastors and laymen. It is the local church purifying herself in obedience to 2 Cor. 7:1, “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”
2. It is unique because it integrates psychological and biblical principles to provide a holistic approach to the

64 Bergin, p. 40.

65 Ibid, p.40.

complex problem of sexual immorality. It incorporates biblically compatible principles from cognitive-behavioral therapy such as training men to “bounce their eyes” when looking at women, spiritual principles such as the need for genuine repentance and heart transformation, and relational principles such as seeking the forgiveness of wives.

3. It addresses every aspect of sexual immorality, with sexual sins ranging from lust to criminal sexual behavior.
4. Unlike many ministries where change is unmeasured, Every Man’s Battle For Purity statistically measures results to determine whether change has truly occurred.
5. It provides a high level of personal accountability by employing both a purity partner and the Purity Platoon. Action is taken to retrieve men who are absent without leave (AWOL). Because it couples actions with words, it goes beyond the cognitive-only approach to change.
6. It is a positive approach to a negative problem. The focus of Every Man’s Battle For Purity is sexual purity. It is not an anti-pornography ministry; hence it is more appealing to men.
7. Believing that every man is subject to sexual temptation

and lust, it takes a broad-based approach to sexual purity, seeking to normalize it and make it every man's battle. It purposely stays broad-based rather than focusing solely on men who are sexually addicted.

8. It is a biblical approach, focusing on forgiveness and freedom through Jesus Christ, inner healing and heart transformation through the power of the Holy Spirit, and upholding the righteousness and holiness of God. It is not rooted in a medical model or a 12-step "higher power" approach.
9. It is affordable, adaptable, reproducible, and transferable for local churches in the United States and overseas. It provides the practical, hands-on tools and education that pastors are looking for in battling sexual immorality in their churches. All curriculum and training materials are available through the National Coalition For Purity. Resources are only sold to churches that have partnered with NCFP to launch purity ministry, because training in how to most effectively use the curriculum is critical to its success. The curriculum cannot be divorced from this training.
10. It is a ministry built around small groups and the covenant relationship rooted in confidentiality in those

groups. It bonds men with one another and teaches them how to trust and develop in-depth relationships.

11. It promotes a high level of discipline that positively impacts other areas of men's lives.
12. It is a feeder for men's ministry in a local church.
13. It is non-denominational and open to any Christian man.
14. For married men, it goes beyond personal purity to seek marital healing and satisfaction.
15. Finally, it features curriculum specifically written and tailored to a sexual purity ministry in a local church.

Conclusion

God has designed men to be leaders, including leaders of their families and churches. If men begin to walk in purity, they will impact their families, churches, and the church with purity. The Church, the Bride of Jesus Christ, will actually become purified and clothed in white raiment (Rev. 19:7, 8). That is the goal of Every Man's Battle For Purity.

As with all human strategies, it is flawed and only as effective as God chooses it to be in the lives of men. After years of ministry to men, I am more convinced than ever that only God can transform a heart and only God can truly purify anyone. Every Man's Battle For Purity is simply a vehicle for God to use to bring glory to Himself by purifying His Church.

APPENDIX M

A PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR A LOCAL CHURCH WOMEN OF TRUTH MINISTRY

By Elsie E. Woolf

. . . If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

John 8:31, 32

Women of Truth

Every Man's Battle For Purity is the flagship ministry of the National Coalition for Purity. Women of Truth is designed to be both a complement to Every Man's Battle For Purity and a viable resource for women. We discovered within weeks of the first men's battle event that something was needed for wives. The very nature of relationship means that we are not an island unto ourselves. Our thoughts and behaviors impact others, either positively or negatively. Marriage, by God's design, takes relationship to an infinitely higher level in that a husband and wife are "one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) If one person in a marriage is hit with a "sin bullet," they both bleed.

So, following The Battle event, as men started dealing with areas of sexual sin and talking (or not talking) to their wives, women started calling for help and resources. Because of this understandable sense of shock and urgency, the very first women's purity support group (not originally called Women of Truth) began within weeks.

Reasons for Women of Truth

The primary reason for Women of Truth is the felt and expressed needs of women. Often when we present our ministry to a church or individual with emphasis on the flagship ministry of Every Man's Battle For Purity, we are asked what we have for women. People readily see the need for purity and understand that it is not just a problem for men. For every man who sexually sins, there is typically a woman who has been betrayed and victimized in some way. Also, the statistics for women regarding sexual sin are rising rapidly. Women, as well as men, can be either victims of sexual sin or sexual sin perpetrators—and sometimes they are both. Women of Truth is designed especially for the woman who has been betrayed due to her husband's sexual sin. Often through the course of the group study, she acknowledges previous sexual betrayals and even her own past or present sexual sin. She also comes to terms with the realization that she has her own purity work to do. But the typical woman comes to the group initially because she is in significant emotional pain due to someone else's sin. "Don't waste the pain," we often say. This is an opportunity to draw near to God and let Him comfort and teach us.

Personal growth, maturity, and spiritual development are also reasons for Women of Truth. People experiencing crisis are often open to learning and changing in positive ways. Women of Truth is a type of crisis intervention that provides opportunities to help women when they need it most. Personal growth areas are not often addressed when things

are going well and there are no bumps in the road of life. But when there is a significant disruption of “business as usual,” we are more open to input. There is increased willingness to be introspective and look at areas within ourselves that require personal change. The learning curve for change goes up during times of crisis. These times are an opportunity for drawing closer to God and for character development.

“. . . We also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:3-5; NASB)

When we choose to draw close to the Lord during times of crisis, we are enabled to persevere and grow in our character, which in turn gives us hope. This hope does not disappoint because this hope is in God through the Holy Spirit, who lives within those who know Him. Hope in anything else is a source of disappointment.

Marriage enrichment and strengthening are more reasons for Women of Truth. After husbands and wives have done their individual work, relationship and marriage work can begin. Sexual sin has shattered the lives of individuals as well as their marriages (and usually numerous other relationships). Only restored individuals can begin the work of restoration in their marriages. The closing lessons in the Women of Truth

curriculum deal with forgiveness, restoring relationship, rebuilding trust, and beginning again.

Leadership of Women of Truth

Biblical leadership is essential. Women of Truth is led by a female director. Ultimately, however, Women of Truth comes under the authority of the local church pastor. For churches that choose to either host or lead a Women of Truth (WOT) group, the pastor's awareness and approval are foundational. The group needs to function under his authority. Although anyone may recommend WOT to a church and its pastor, it is preferable for the pastor to initiate the program and contact a woman or women in his church who may have a heart for this ministry. (The National Coalition for Purity espouses the complementary model of male leadership in the home and in the church.)

Women who lead Women of Truth groups are unique ladies. They typically have had personal and painful experiences with their own husbands' sexual sin. This ministry does not attract the average women's ministry-minded woman, and so it should not be assumed that a church women's ministry director will be involved with leading Women of Truth. Because of the subject matter and issues involved, WOT does not fit neatly under the umbrella of women's ministries. WOT is more likely to come under a care ministries department or stand alone.

Group leaders in local churches receive training by the NCFP Women of Truth director. This is typically accomplished through three

four-hour, in-depth sessions covering the 12 WOT workbook lessons. A woman seeking to lead and facilitate a group needs to be faithful, available, and teachable. She must have a heart for this ministry and have some type of personal experience with the issue of marital unfaithfulness. She needs to have done her own emotional and spiritual work prior to attempting to help others. The group may be led by a female counseling professional or a lay woman, but WOT training is essential for both. It is best to have one primary leader with two or more assistant leaders-in-training.

Structure of Women of Truth

A Women of Truth group meets once per week for 12 consecutive weeks and covers one lesson per night from the Women of Truth manual, *Healing for Your Heart: When Your Marriage Vows Have Been Broken*. It is preferable to have a WOT information meeting one to two weeks prior to the group start date. Publicity is important, so both the information meeting and the Women of Truth group start date must be publicized well in advance—approximately six weeks prior to the events. There is a celebration dinner following the completion of the 12-week group. The dinner can be at the host church, at someone's home, or at a restaurant.

Each group meeting is divided into two parts. The first 55 minutes are given to opening in prayer and teaching the lesson. Then there is a ten-minute break, followed by a 55-minute small group time.

For the small group time the large group is broken up into smaller table groups of eight with assistant leaders as facilitators. Small group time includes discussion of the homework questions, sharing of concerns and prayer requests, and prayer time. The evening ends with a closing prayer.

Challenges of Launching a Women of Truth Ministry in a Local Church

The first challenge is advance planning and preparation. *The need for a Women of Truth group must be acted upon before the need is obvious.* The need is usually not evident until about two weeks after the men's Purity Platoons have begun. Therefore, it is important to recruit WOT leaders, get them trained, and have the information meeting date and start date for the group established prior to The Battle event for men. In the best-case scenario, preparations for Every Man's Battle For Purity and preparations for Women of Truth occur simultaneously.

Ideally, every church that hosts Every Man's Battle For Purity will also host a Women of Truth group. But not every host church has women who are qualified or able to commit to leading a 12-week group. In the absence of lay leadership within the local church, a church may seek to contract with a trained therapist to lead a group. Another option is to direct their women to a Women of Truth group at another location. These are viable options that sometimes require additional effort and finances.

Another challenge is helping women feel comfortable enough to join a WOT group. Many hesitate because they have already suffered

significantly and dealt with so many issues regarding their husband's unfaithfulness; going to a group feels like more than they can handle. Most women are already overly responsible and extremely busy in their homes and families, as well as church and work. They are characterized by taking care of others to the point of neglecting themselves. For this kind of woman, even if she wants to attend a Women of Truth group, she may not feel free to spend the time and energy on meeting her own needs. Also, there are women who have detached to the point that they are convinced that their husband's problem is not their problem. For them, attending a group because of "his problem" is not a consideration.

Issues and Struggles for Women

Some women struggle with either being overly responsible or under responsible with regard to their husband's behavior and their marriage and family. They may have an insecure attachment style that causes them to be either overly dependent or overly independent. The Women of Truth program seeks to challenge women to depend upon and trust in God as their ultimate source of security. It is our goal to empower women to become healthy, well-defined individuals who are secure in their relationship with the Lord and embrace Him as their primary source of attachment.

Other issues of concern are denial and inability to face reality. Typically there is a functionally unhealthy relationship between a husband who hides sinful behavior through deception and a wife who

is unable to tolerate reality. Facing reality is the starting point of every healing journey and the first lesson in *Healing for Your Heart: When Your Marriage Vows Have Been Broken*, the Women of Truth workbook.

Still other areas where women struggle and which Women of Truth addresses are: management of feelings, codependency, ability to confront, grief and loss, boundaries, understanding and accepting the way men are wired, self-worth, understanding forgiveness and repentance, relationship restoration, rebuilding trust, and how to make a fresh start.

Rebuilding Trust

The impact of sexual infidelity on a marriage cannot be overstated. On a trust scale of 1—10, it rates a -10. Rebuilding trust takes time. It cannot be hurried; it cannot be demanded. It does not happen overnight. Just as the deterioration of trust did not happen quickly, so rebuilding trust will not happen quickly. It is a process that takes time, patience, perseverance, and intentional effort. Rebuilding trust is hard work, but the “gain for the pain” is worth it. It is a process similar to that described in Romans 5:3-5. It is a difficult time that ultimately produces hope that does not disappoint.

Rebuilding trust takes two people who are committed to the task no matter how hard it feels, how long it takes, or how often they feel like it is not worth it. *It is worth it.* The marriage relationship is worth it. Honoring the marriage commitment before God and “these witnesses” is worth it. For the sake of the children and for the sake of marriage as a

picture of Christ and the Church, it is worth it! Knowing it is worth it for our happiness and that of others, as well as glorifying God, can keep a husband and wife on track when they feel like quitting. Satan would love us to quit. God loves us to persevere for His glory—and for our holiness and happiness. He calls us to do hard things and He gives us the grace and strength to do them if we will trust Him foremost.

Trust Must Be Earned

Trust is the relationship bridge between two people—and it takes time to build a bridge. Trust must be earned. The trust bridge is built one plank at a time upon the good foundation of repentance and forgiveness. From the point of true repentance, the rebuilding of trust typically takes two to five years if both husband and wife are well invested in the process. The planks are day-to-day choices, with actions that are faithfully and consistently done as evidence of a changed mind and a repentant heart. Plank by plank, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, the trust bridge is built.

Trust building is not for the faint at heart. It takes courage, patience, and compassion. Both people must be doing their work, appreciating the efforts of the other. For the offender, there may be times when the requests and expectations of the offended may seem unreasonable. But for the sake of building trust, compliance is necessary. For the offended, consistent compliance over time by the offender should begin to lessen the need for excessive structure.

For example, when initially working on building trust with a repentant husband who has had an affair, a wife may request and even demand that he check in with her five times a day when he is away from her. She may expect him to call when he leaves work and account for every minute of his time until he pulls into the driveway. She may expect him to answer his phone whenever she calls or call her back within ten minutes. The husband may resist and refuse to comply, saying that she is “over-reacting.” Certainly he can say no to what his wife says she needs in order to begin to trust him again. Choosing not to comply, however, is choosing his independence over doing the work of trust-building. If he says he wants to rebuild trust, he must be willing to do whatever it takes to earn it.

On the other hand, if the husband has complied with the wife’s requests and demands consistently over time, and she does not start to relax expectations with regard to calls and accounting for his time, control will override trust. Couples often need the help of professional counseling when it comes to the practical and daily aspects of rebuilding trust.

The degree of trust given must be proportionate to the receiver’s level of trustworthiness. To naively trust someone who has not proven himself to be trustable is often how women get into trouble in the first place. Trusting someone without understanding his character is a set up for betrayal. Often there are warning signs and “red flags” that have

been ignored. Character can never be assumed or communicated through words. Character must be observed through consistent righteous behavior over time.

Jesus, Alone, Is Unconditionally Trustworthy

Finally, the only Person who deserves our unconditional trust is Jesus. Often we get into trouble because we have put someone or something else into the “God-shaped void” in our lives. It is idolatry to trust someone or something else more than we trust the Lord. Only God can fill our empty places. Only God can be there for us every minute of every day and night. Only God’s love for us is unconditional and unselfish. Only He knows what is best for us. To unconditionally trust someone other than God to meet our needs is to dishonor and reject Him. We set ourselves up for disappointment, as well as set up another person for failure. Rebuilding trust depends upon knowing that unconditional love and trust belong to the Lord God alone.

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Irv Woolf is a graduate of Bradley University (1969), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, with a Master of Divinity (1973), and Denver Seminary in Denver, Colorado, with a Doctor of Ministry in Marriage and Family Counseling (2006). He is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America (1995). Irv is the author of several purity manuals including: *Purity Boot Camp Marching Orders*, *Purity Platoon Battle Plans*, and *Maturity Platoon Combat Training Manual*. He is also the author of the book *The Power of Purity: God's Design for Sex in a Sex-Saturated World* (2009).

Having been a pastor since 1973, Irv currently leads the National Coalition for Purity and the popular Every Man's Battle For Purity ministry. His passion is to see the Church, the Bride of Christ, become sexually pure and prepared for her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Irv's wife Elsie is a marriage and family therapist. Irv and Elsie have been married for more than 40 years and are the parents of three adult children and seven beautiful grandchildren. In his spare time, Irv enjoys golf, bicycling, and hot cider and popcorn on a cold night. Irv and Elsie reside in suburban Minneapolis, Minnesota.

ABOUT THE MINISTRY

National Coalition For Purity

The National Coalition For Purity (NCFP) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) ministry. Founded in 2006 by Dr. Irv and Elsie Woolf, NCFP is governed by a nine-person board of directors and headquartered in Maple Grove, Minnesota. The ministry was birthed to meet the growing need for sexual purity in the church. The vision of NCFP is “to purify the Bride of Christ, one church at a time.” NCFP is a “boots-on-the-ground” ministry that works directly with local churches to launch purity ministries for their congregations and others in their communities.

The mission of NCFP is “to challenge, resource, and train every church in America in sexual purity.” NCFP has a huge mission field—the Church in the United States. According to the Wikipedia, there are more than 450,000 churches in the United States.⁶⁶ The need is great. We believe in the Church. We believe that like sheep, the Church longs to be clean and pure. She is miserable living in sexual impurity. God has given us the mission of helping her in the quest to become pure by writing curriculum, developing strategies that work, training lay leadership to spearhead the ministry, and cheerleading from the sidelines as she grows in purity.

Finally, the purpose of NCFP is “to make sexual purity an unavoidable issue for the Church of Jesus Christ.” For too long the

66 *How many churches are there in US?*, In *WikiAnswers.com* (Retrieved July 24, 2009 from http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_many_churches_are_there_in_US, 2009).

Church has avoided the issue of sexual purity making it a taboo topic.

The devil loves the darkness and he has successfully convinced the

Church to keep God's great gift of sexuality in the dark. The purpose of

NCFP is to bring sexual purity into the light and help the Church to walk

in the light of that sexual purity.

WHAT DOES A BRIDE'S WHITE DRESS STAND FOR?

WHY DO PASTORS FALL INTO SEXUAL SIN?

CAN FALLEN PASTORS BE RESTORED?



Irv Woolf has been the Director of the National Coalition For Purity since its inception in 2006. He is a graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.Div.) and Denver Seminary (D.Min.) and is a

marriage and family counselor. Having pastored churches since 1973, Irv currently leads NCFP and the popular Every Man's Battle For Purity ministry. His wife, Elsie, is also a marriage and family counselor and leads the Women of Truth ministry. Together the Woolfs provide indepth counseling for couples through their counseling institute, Hopewell Marriage and Family Institute. Irv has devoted his life to equipping and sanctifying the church, the Bride of Christ, with a goal of helping her to become pure and prepared for her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Irv and Elsie have been married for over 40 years and are the parents of three adult children and seven beautiful grandchildren. The Woolfs reside in Maple Grove, Minnesota.

HOPEWELL PUBLISHING

Categories: sexuality/holiness/religion

"The beachhead has been established. It is time. You are being called to serve as God's leader in the battle for men's purity. These are the tools and strategies to use. It is not a quick, easy plan—and it is not free—but it is tried and true. The freedom on the other side is worth the cost of facing the fears and challenges. Countless others are praying that you will accept God's call to engage in this most important battle.

"As your heart longs to know God and walk humbly with Him, take courage and know that there is forgiveness and there is victory in daily life available to you and the men in your sphere of influence. As a transformation begins to take place, there is freedom from temptation to sexually sin. When that happens you will experience a new and refreshing sense of the life and freedom God intends for His children."

Dale Telle

FORMER DIRECTOR, EVERY MAN'S BATTLE FOR PURITY
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