

the source

SUMMER 2011

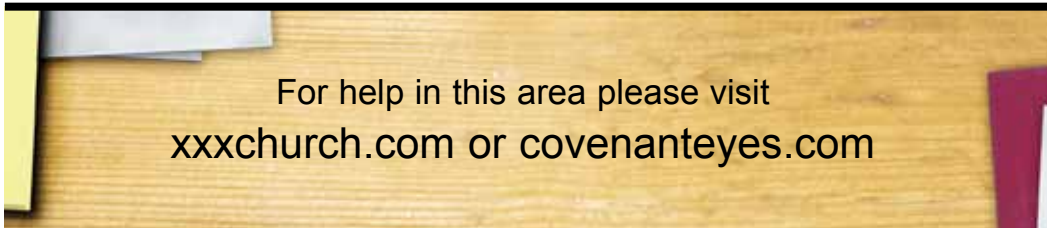
Sexual Identity





PORNOGRAPHY IN AMERICA

- For every 10 men in church, 5 are struggling with pornography.
(The Call to Biblical Manhood. Man in the Mirror, 6 July, 2004.)
- \$3 billion is generated by child porn annually.
(xxxchurch.com)
- 11 is the average age a person first views porn. *(xxxchurch.com)*
- 40 million adults visit pornographic websites daily. *(xxxchurch.com)*
- Nearly half of all divorces list pornography as a main contributing factor. *(xxxchurch.com)*
- 34 percent of churchgoing women said they have intentionally visited porn websites online.
(Mark O'Keefe. The Charlotte Observer)
- 70% of 18 to 24 year old men visit pornographic sites in a typical month. 66% of men in their 20s and 30s also report being regular users of pornography.
(First-person: the culture of pornography, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Baptist Press, 28 December 2005.)
- U.S. porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC (6.2 billion). The pornography industry, according to conservative estimates, brings in \$57 billion per year, of which the United States is responsible for \$12 billion.
(Internet Pornography and Loneliness: An Association? Vincent Cyrus Yoder, Thomas B.)



For help in this area please visit
xxxchurch.com or covenanteyes.com

BOOKS TO READ

Order at 1-800-641-4310 or www.gph.org



Every Young Man's Battle

By Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker with Mike Yorkey

Young men are surrounded by sexual images that open the door to temptation. How can teenagers survive the onslaught? By equipping them with God's unflinching truth! Covering topics like choosing authentic manhood, masturbation, homosexuality, and sexual honor, this award-winning book equips young men to train their eyes, clean up their thought life, and live a strong, pure life God's way.



And You Invited Me In

By Cheryl Moss Tyler

Alex Marshall is dying of AIDS. Over his partner Scott's objections, he asks his conservative Christian sister, Annie Whitley, to help take care of him. This book is a moving story that answers the question: does extending grace equal agreement?

OTHER RESOURCES

Living Pure in An Impure World – 6 part DVD www.gospelpublishing.com

Leaving Homosexuality www.exodusbooks.org/Books

Every Single Man's Battle www.gospelpublishing.com

www.focusonthefamily.com

www.covenanteyes.com

www.xxxchurch.com

www.crosswalk.com

(Article: *Wading through Singleness*)

Every Single Woman's Battle www.amazon.com

Every Man's Battle/Every Woman's Battle www.amazon.com

Real Sex: The Naked Truth About Chastity www.amazon.com
www.andyouinvitedmein.com

www.exodusinternational.org

www.loveinaction.org



I don't know life away from porn and my family has no idea. It started when I was a teenager and it's never stopped. My college years were full of porn, lust and sexual addictions.

A successful businessman who had plenty to lose by being honest spoke these words to me over lunch one day. In that moment, he overcame his fear of rejection and condemnation in order to seek help.

Those raised in Christian homes can face many challenging temptations between the ages of 18 and 24. Your youth pastor is not holding you accountable as often, your parents are not as visibly present, and living alone can certainly present problems. Is it okay to be alone in your apartment with your boyfriend/girlfriend? What about computer accountability? You are paying the bills now; who will know you bought a pay-per-view? Freedom in discovering one's identity can be dangerous. How can you keep your life pure with this new freedom?

Your sexuality is not something to ignore, but rather, to be embraced. Remember, we are created in God's image. God created us as sexual beings and sex is not just "pro-creational," it is also recreational. In creating us in His image,

God desires us to discover our identity in Him. Whether the issue is alcoholism, drug abuse, homosexuality, pride, or materialism the underlying problem occurs when we attempt to place identity in something other than the Creator. By the time we launch out into the real world, television, movies, music, friends, books, spiritual connection within an organization, and even our family members have shaped our sense of sexuality. Major factors include parent relationships, same gender friendships, and opposite sex relationships.

God desires us to
discover our identity
in Him.

The catch...You are responsible for you! We can take the negative things that have been entrenched in our lives and overcome them. Did you catch that? You can overcome the things that so easily ensnare. You can by the power of the Holy Spirit. He can work in ways that neither you nor a high-dollar therapist could ever imagine.

As a young adult or single adult, there are some things you can do that will help in the area of sexual identity. Allow me to share a few.

1. Put down roots in the Word. In Col 3:10 (NIV), Paul reminds the church that we have taken off the old self *and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.* Once you begin washing and renewing your mind, the

trash will be pushed out; even your sexual identity gets an overhaul. The Bible is the imprint of God's image in our lives. Dig deeply into the Word and watch your sexual identity align itself with the Word.

2. Dating is not a selection process.

Dating is preparation for marriage with the one person you intend to marry. "How do I know what kind of person I should marry unless I date?" There are certain arenas in which to determine personal compatibility. Dating as preparation for entering a healthy marriage helps you draw strength from each other as you stand together in faithfulness to God in the physical component of your relationship.

3. Purity is important, even when no one is watching.

The habits and boundaries you set today will affect you long into your marriage. Moreover, the sexual lifestyle you develop today will greatly affect your children. The time is now to submit your passions and drives to the magnifying glass of the conviction of the Holy Spirit. As your relationship with Christ matures, the sins that hurt Him will become less appealing.

4. Forgive yourself. Some enter the adult years with more luggage than you can find in baggage claim at your local airport, while others emerge unscathed. No matter what your story, there is no denying that the teen years were far from perfect. One of the most important things you can do after you have repented is to forgive yourself, as God has already forgiven you. Holding on tightly to your past will prevent you from claiming an amazing future.

5. Work hard to be the best you that you can be.

This means finding your identity in positive things: deepening your relationship with God through prayer and studying the Word, developing a strong work ethic, cultivating friendships that will challenge you, and absorbing books that cause you to make positive and lasting changes.

6. There is always hope.

No matter how entrenched you are in lust, pornography, marital infidelity, or a current sexual lifestyle with multiple partners, there is always a way out. However, you must choose it.

7. Sexual identity will journey with you the rest of your life.

Make your life count! Remember what I said earlier, "You are responsible for you." No longer can we blame our future on our past influences. Now that you have this information, you are responsible to choose your influences from here on out. What an opportunity!

What about the man who confided with me over lunch? He has now been free from porn and other sexual addictions for over 5 years! He is married and has a great relationship with his wife and kids. He fought a good fight and won, and so can you!



Richard Pickrell is a staff pastor in North Texas and has served in ministry over 15 years. He and his wife have four children, two dogs, and a minivan. Follow Richard on twitter: @PastorRP or email him at rpickrell@mac.com

Unconditional Love Changed My Life as a Homosexual

It was 1983, I was divorced and my life was filled with homosexual promiscuous relationships. A single friend, Pat, pursued a platonic relationship with me where she shared with enthusiasm about her relationship with Jesus. She talked about her own divorce and sketchy past. She was boldly honest with me about where she had come from. Pat did not seem to be the least bit uncomfortable as I shared about my weekend party lifestyle.

Pat introduced me to her friend Jerry. He was kind and had a great listening ear for the things I talked about. At one point I was really depressed, and Pat and Jerry came to my house to talk and pray with me. They accepted me right where I was. They had no agenda nor did they challenge my behavior. They just loved me right where I was.

I was invited to attend the introduction of a new singles pastor at a ministry in Omaha, Nebraska. Dennis Franck was the new singles pastor at Glad Tidings Church, and I liked what he had to say and felt drawn to the vision he had shared for this ministry called FOCAS - Fellowship of Christian Adult Singles.

I was not ready to make any changes in my life at that point, and was too immersed in my various relationships and sexual pursuits. Questions lingered in my heart of what it might be like to be a Christian. Pat continued

to share with me about the grace and forgiveness of Christ offered to anyone who would accept Him.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (NIV)

MY LIFE STARTED TO CHANGE

One morning at work, Pat brought me a Bible. She told me it was just a \$3 Bible she wanted me to have and suggested I begin reading the book of John. By this time, I was really curious about Bible stuff and began to read faithfully. I finally got it! So this is what it means to be a Christian? I accepted the gift Jesus was offering. My life began to change dramatically, but initially, not the way you might think. I looked for a Christian partner, and found a man who loved me deeply, not realizing this relationship was also outside of God's design. This unhealthy relationship led me back to the promiscuity that was so familiar to me.

In February of 1984, I became very tired of all the broken relationships. I heard FOCAS was hosting a weekend retreat and felt a strong desire to go. I called my partner and said our relationship had reached its end and that I would no longer be seeing him.

I went to the weekly meeting at FOCAS faithfully every week. Life wasn't perfect, and I still struggled with my lifestyle. I gave into temptation and went back to my former partner one last time. It was at that point that I talked with Dennis about what had been going on in my life. He embraced me,

accepted me right where I was, and promised to walk alongside me as the support and encouragement I needed to help me overcome temptations.

MY DECISION TO LEAVE THE LIFESTYLE

I now decided to live my life in a God-honoring way and became involved in FOCAS and a great church for the next three years. It was during this time I completely left the homosexual lifestyle, met Vileen, and later married. Following this, I moved out of town to work with a ministry helping those with sexual addictions. We have now been married 20 years, and Dennis and I still remain good friends today.

At times, I still face temptation, but with the help of the Holy Spirit I have chosen to remain pure and faithful to a Biblical lifestyle that is pleasing to my

God and Savior.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:1 (KJV)



John J. Smid is the Executive Director of Grace Rivers Ministry: www.gracerivers.com.



Matthew Barnett
Best-selling author of *The Cause Within You*



Matthew West
Grammy nominated singer and song-writer

Young Adult Single Adult LUNCHEON

Thursday, August 4th
12:30-2:00PM
Phoenix Convention Center
Phoenix, AZ

Tickets are \$33 and are available at generalcouncil.ag.org/register or call 417-862-2781 x4125

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EVENTS 2017

July 2 – Baltimore, MD

Empower 2011 - Single Adult Ministry Training
Contact: Carney Assembly of God
Pastor Greg Kittredge gregk@carneyag.com

July 8-10 – Marengo, OH

reVERB Young Adult Camp
ohioministry.net
Contact: Chris Gross
Chris@ricdublin.com

August 4 – Phoenix, AZ

National Young Adult/Single Adult Luncheon - AG General Council
www.singles.ag.org, singles@ag.org
www.youngadults.ag.org, youngadults@ag.org

August 17-19 – Gatlinburg, TN

Navigate Retreat East – Leadership Retreat/Forum
www.navigateconference.com
Contact: singles@ag.org

October 8 – Bloomington, MN

"Live, Learn, Lead" Young Adult/Single Adult Ministry Training
Contact: singles@ag.org, (417) 862-2781 x4125

October 14-16 – Odenville, AL

Reasonate Young Adults Retreat
www.alabamayouthministries.com
Contact: Stefanie Holman, dydsec@alabamaag.org

