

# What Causes Sexual Sin?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvhwoC0hPVU>

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## An Uncluttered Christmas

I used to be a consummate Christmas shopper. By the time December hit, I was way ahead of the game. I would have a mountain of bargain finds, admired goodies and toys to die for tucked away on a shelf just waiting to be wrapped and stowed lovingly under the tree. I found that shopping ahead spread the financial burden throughout the year and helped me avoid the last-minute holiday shopping rush.

Sounds like a plan, doesn't it? I thought so, too, until several years ago. Something happened that made me rethink my supposedly brilliant strategy.

It was the night before Christmas, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, but I felt like a louse! The tree looked bulimic – only I was the one who had binged. Brilliantly wrapped packages were bulging from every available nook and cranny.

I slumped to the floor and thought, "We have only two children. There's enough here for 10!"

My husband and I stared at each other. We realized that things had gotten out of hand. We had to ask ourselves: What message are we giving our children?

One by one we started dismantling the swollen pile. This present can wait for a birthday, this one for next Christmas, this one for a special reward for hard work.

Finally the stack looked sensible.

Right then and there, we made a decision. In the future, Christmas gifts would be limited to three types: (1) A gift really desired; (2) a needed item; 3) something educational. Of course, our children hated the idea and hoped we would eventually come to our senses.

We haven't.

And we've seen a change. No longer is Christmas an endless list of "wants." There is a new emphasis on cherished gifts. This represents a stark contrast to the disturbing trend among kids today to feel entitled to get whatever they want, whenever they want it.

As I've listened to children move through the hallways of our house, I've heard the chatter of "more." "We have more videos than you." "I have a CD player in my room." "You don't have your own phone line?" "I'm asking for a laptop." "You need a cell phone to look important."

They get it from their parents. My favorite is the mother who proudly boasts that her daughter will outdo everyone in the neighborhood. She will have the best of everything – before everyone else. The daughter knows this strategy and is horrified if anyone beats her to the material punch.

Not understanding her conscious intention to overload her daughter with "stuff," I naively asked, "Aren't you worried you're spoiling her?" The blank stare she gave me was enough to answer my question.

One summer the hot ticket was a scooter. Everyone on our block ran to the stores to buy one. My kids asked, but they knew what was coming: "Tell me again why I should run to the store to buy you a \$100 item?"

Materialism not only distorts the meaning of Christmas but also creates ungrateful kids. It's time to stop the madness. Instead of a new scooter, take your kids to a soup

kitchen and let them  
serve. Visit a homeless shelter or a hospital children's ward,  
and put things in  
perspective.

I know what I am saying isn't new, but we need to hear it  
regularly. It's so easy to indulge our kids this time of year.  
But we need to  
examine our motives.

Is our overindulgence related to guilt from being  
absent or unavailable? Is it an attempt to communicate love,  
compete with  
others, create an identity or look successful? Is it the  
result of idol worship,  
a lack of self-restraint or misguided thinking?


When I see kids quickly  
open presents and throw them off to the side without even a  
thank you, I know  
something is wrong. When little Suzie tells me Christmas was  
no fun because she  
didn't get what she wanted, I am concerned. The Grinch hasn't  
stolen Christmas;  
our ungratefulness has.

Christmas is about God's giving His Son as a  
glorious gift to mankind. Don't clutter that gift with so many  
others that He  
gets lost in the fray. This season teach the children in your  
life to cherish  
the gift they already have – Jesus.

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# Holy Dissatisfaction

Did you feel guilty on Thanksgiving—the day of all days to  express heartfelt gratitude to God—because you aren't TOTALLY content? Perhaps you offered up the obligatory thanks for family, home, job, health and the hearty meal as you sat around the holiday feast, but inside, you were aware that your heart is not quite full to the brim with satisfaction—and you aren't sure what to do about it.

What could possibly be wrong?

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# Helping the Homeless

To contact the organizations included in *Charisma's* report on ministries assisting America's homeless, click on the links below.

## Convoy of Hope

Convoy of Hope exists to feed millions of people in need in the United States and around the world through children's nutrition initiatives, citywide outreaches and disaster response.

## New York City Relief

New York City Relief exists to connect the poor, oppressed, and addicted with a pathway toward help and hope. Through outreach partnerships, we seek to be a bridge between the

needs on the street and resources in the community to meet those needs. These things we do...that others may live.

## **Word of Life Assembly of God**

Through its Hands Extended ministry, Word of Life Assembly of God reaches out to the homeless in the District of Columbia with food and the gospel.

## **Rescue Atlanta**

Rescue Atlanta is a church that is made up of more than 70 percent homeless. It provides food, as well as showers, laundry facilities, and a medical clinic for those in need.

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## **Ministry Decries Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Bill**

A prominent ex-gay ministry is speaking out against a proposed law in Uganda that could penalize anyone involved in same-sex sexual relationships and anyone knowledgeable of those affairs.

Exodus International leaders said the Anti-Homosexuality Bill of 2009, introduced into the Ugandan Parliament on Oct. 14 to affirm traditional family values, discriminates against people with same-sex attraction.

(Photo: Randy Thomas)

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# Reflecting the Lord's Bountiful Love

I opened the front door and came face to face with a rather large gift basket wrapped in clear cellophane with a gigantic velvet orange and brown bow. It was so big that it blocked the face of the deliveryman.

The sight of such a gift was too wonderful for words! As a young married couple, Terry and I were going through hard times, with little money for extras, much less the basics!

The arrival of this surprise basket of goodies was not only timely, but a miracle!

Just who was behind this?

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## Video: Pam Cope Interview

Pam Cope didn't close her heart when she learned about vulnerable African orphans. Today she is reaching children around the world. Watch her story.

{youtubejw}f3BiGYsq05g{/youtubejw}

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## Video: DIY Gift Ideas

Let's be honest: Christmas gifts aren't easy in a recession. Here are videos of some practical ways to make your gifts both creative and economical.

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|---|
| <b>Make homemade jams/preserves</b>           |
| {youtubejw}FLI7xRxqL_g{/youtubejw}            |
| <b>Make homemade play dough</b>               |
| {youtubejw}FDiS8KqMH8w{/youtubejw}            |
| <b>Make homemade Rudolf Christmas cookies</b> |
| {youtubejw}fMyD7XIBntE{/youtubejw}            |

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## The Bible's Archeological Evidence

Atheists scoff at the idea. Some people deny it. But there is archeological evidence of the validity of the Bible. Watch a video montage of proof below.

{youtube}4e20Cq5yob4{/youtube}

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## Bring on the Towels

Have you ever had mixed thoughts and emotions about your spouse? I have-just this morning, in fact.

Today started out as any other day, but for some reason things just affected me differently than they usually do. I got out of bed and began my regular devotional time with the Lord, reading the Word, studying a powerful book, and praying. When I stood to my feet, I was filled with peace and gratitude.

“I feel great!” I thought to myself. And off I went to begin what I thought was going to be a wonderful day.

The kitchen was first on my agenda. I don’t know why, exactly, but I have a plaque over my stove that reads, “A kitchen is the heart of the home.” When I was growing up, my mother always kept a clean kitchen, with a pot of something deliciously fragrant simmering on the stove.

The only thing fragrant about my kitchen this morning was a hot, empty coffee pot, left sitting on the coffee maker with the switch in the “on” position, by my husband.

“I get so tired of this,” I thought. “Why do I have to clean up his mess?”

I picked up the pot and carried it over to the sink. There I discovered the spoon he’d used to stir the sugar in his cup.

It had been set beside the sink and now lay in a brown, sugary puddle. I grabbed a cloth and began to wipe the counter-muttering the whole time.

“That man!” I said in frustration. “Why can’t he just put the spoon in the sink where it belongs?”

I decided to tackle the bathroom instead. You can probably guess what I found-beard clippings and blobs of toothpaste in the sink, and puddles of water on the counter top. I turned to grab a towel.

As I did, I looked at my towel, folded neatly in thirds over the rack (Mom said double is allowed, too, but not as nice looking). My husband’s towel was bunched and crumpled, as if he doesn’t care at all about being neat. I stood there staring.

After a few moments, I started to unravel and re-fold his towel. But something happened to change my whole mind-set and along with it, my feelings. I looked from his towel to mine, back and forth.

I felt myself begin to soften. I started to appreciate and praise God for our differences. Feelings of love, softening my heart, began to manifest. I tenderly touched his towel, leaving it as it had been.

Then I went back into the kitchen to clear the table, where he had been sitting and drinking his cup of coffee. My eyes caught sight of his open Bible and a yellow highlighting pen. I remembered the early morning I discovered him sitting in the same chair with closed eyes and folded hands, offering up a silent prayer to God.