

4 Questions to Consider in Response to the Gay Agenda

With the onslaught of information about same-sex marriage in the news, not to mention pressure from those supporting it to get on board, here's the fundamental questions we must ask ourselves when it comes to taking our stand.

1. How Did Jesus Deal With Sexual Sin?

We find one example in Jesus' discourse with the prostitute in the book of John:

"But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

"At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

"But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

"At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'

"'No one, sir,' she said.

"'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and

leave your life of sin'" (John 8:1-11, NIV).

Jesus doesn't minimize the prostitute's sin; He challenges her to move beyond her sinful lifestyle now that a second chance is given to her. Jesus' unconditional love didn't give people a free pass to continue in their sin. He gave them an out for their sin.

2. In God We Trust?

We must as a nation acknowledge that our national motto, which is on every currency—"In God We Trust"—no longer represents the belief of the population or its leadership. Our beliefs are reflected in our elections, not our words. Our nation is living a lie. A nation cannot violate the values our Creator expressed in His instruction manual for living, the Bible, and expect God simply to turn His eye from evil. God said in His Word to beware of calling things that are evil good: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Is. 5:20).

God doesn't change with the times, nor should the church or Christianity. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). His cultural bar does not move up or down with the moral condition of that culture.

The sad truth is that our nation has already become a secular nation. The values represented today among leadership, the media and the majority reveal that we are a nation headed the way of Europe, where God is no longer allowed in the public discourse of government. The idea that moral considerations should be part of the discussion is now taboo. As such, we can expect to see God remove His hand of protection if this trend continues. There is a remnant in the nation that still hold true to the absolutes of God's Word, but this remnant is getting smaller in number.

3. How Does God Deal With the Sins of a Nation?

Israel's sin was the worship of idols. God judged them by allowing their enemies to defeat them. Other times He allowed liberal and unholy leadership to rise in power. In other words, the spiritual condition of the greater majority led to them being given a leader who reflected their spiritual condition. The more ungodly the people became, the more they embraced leaders who reflected their values.

We can see this taking place today in America. We are the frog in the kettle in which the water is gradually getting hotter and hotter until it is too late.

The cultural idol of today is tolerance. Young people are reflecting more and more a belief system that is not based on any absolutes. Their god is the god of tolerance: "You do what you want as long as it doesn't affect me." We have made personal rights a national idol, regardless of the moral consequences. Israel made the same mistake regarding foreign idols.

Some liberals have gone so far as to state that being a Christian today is synonymous with being a bigot. Any opinion that reflects an absolute view that may not be the view of the public majority is often construed as being narrow-minded for a "progressive society." This is especially true among the liberal media today.

4. Does a Nation Answer to God?

David Barton has written extensively on the Christian foundations of America and its accountability for its sins. He says:

"This was a question the American Founders dealt with on the floor of the Constitutional Convention. They concluded that a nation doesn't have a spirit or a soul. Therefore when a nation dies, it is dead and won't be resurrected later to answer for its failures, as a person will be who does have a spirit and soul. George Mason said, 'As nations cannot be

punished or rewarded in the next world, they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects Providence punished national sins by national calamities.' Providence was commonly used by the founders to refer to God.

"God's judgment on a nation because of its ungodly leaders is evidenced many places in the Bible. A couple of them are:

"1. Because of the corruption of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel, the nation went without rain for three years. The righteous had to suffer too even though they had no part in it.

"2. King David was normally a good King, but because of his disobedience to God when he numbered his army, a plague came upon the nation and wiped out 70,000 people. The Nation suffered because of the leader."

This is now the dilemma our government faces. Will it remove any moral component to the argument? It is clear this is the direction our government has taken. Just the mention of tying morality to the argument causes an uproar in the liberal media.

It all becomes a slippery slope when you remove the moral dimension. We will end up like Canada, where it is unlawful to preach against homosexuality, which could lead to the removal of a church's nonprofit status if a pastor teaches what the Bible says, making it a hate crime for discrimination against a group of people. Government and businesses would now have to offer the same benefits to homosexual couples as it does to heterosexual couples.

Day of Reckoning

When God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 15, He described His plan for Abraham and the nation of Israel. He told Abraham that He would bring him into the Promised Land after 400 years of slavery.

God used interesting terminology when describing one of the catalysts for this work to begin. He said “*the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete*” (Gen. 15:16), which would be the catalyst for the people of Israel to go into the Promised Land. The Amorites were a very ungodly people. God saw their sin as so great that He was going to use the Israelites to wipe them out. There is a place in nations where God begins to judge unrighteousness.

America is not immune to the judgment of God. We can expect God to judge the sins of our nation as our sins get greater and greater. Pray that God has mercy on our nation and that He will raise up a generation of righteous leaders and change agents who believe leadership must include morally based governance. God can shift the culture back to Himself in one day if His people get in alignment with Him and His ways. However, it always starts with us.

As Christ-followers, we are called to stand in the gap for the culture: “So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one” (Ezek. 22:30). Will we in the body of Christ be up for the task?

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

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The Difference Between the Gospel of Salvation and the Gospel of the Kingdom

The simplest way to understand the distinction between the two kingdoms is to recognize that the gospel of salvation deals only with the salvation of your soul. The gospel of the kingdom deals with all things the cross affected, including not only salvation but also the reconciliation of all things—including the material world that was lost in the fall.

It is helpful at this stage for us to define what we mean by a kingdom. Myles Munroe, author of *Kingdom Principles*, describes a kingdom in these terms: “A kingdom is the governing influence of a king over his territory, impacting it with his personal will, purpose, and intent, producing a culture, values, morals, and lifestyle that reflect the king’s desires and nature for his citizens.” Jesus’ desire was for God’s kingdom to be manifested on earth. When He taught the disciples to pray, He petitioned His heavenly Father by asking, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” While we may never see God’s kingdom completely manifested on earth as it is in heaven, Jesus is telling us that we should ask for it and expect it. Moses was led by God not to establish a religion but to establish a nation of people who would love, serve and honor God. In other words, God wanted His kingdom expressed completely through their lives.

The following comparison between attributes of the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of salvation provides a better understanding of the two. When Jesus prayed the Lord’s Prayer, He prayed for the manifestation of what was happening in heaven to happen on earth: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it

is in heaven.” His emphasis was more than salvation.

Gospel of Salvation	Gospel of the Kingdom
Focus: Evangelism/salvation	Focus: Taking dominion
Eternal, heavenly focus	Material, social, earthly, secular
Addresses only the soul	Addresses soul and body
“Rapture escape” mentality	“Possess the land” mentality
Sacred vs. secular–dualism	Impacts all aspects of society
Goal: Transaction, “win the next soul”	Goal: Influence through servanthood, godly leadership, active faith
Example: Nigeria	Example: Almolonga, Guatemala

This diagram shows the contrast between the gospel of salvation and the gospel of the kingdom. One is passive; the other is active, with a goal of taking possession, as Joshua was instructed.

One of the problems in the church today is that we often talk about “escaping this evil world” through the rapture instead of influencing the world. Some research tells us that as much as 60 percent of the population of the country of Nigeria may be born again. Yet the culture has some of the

greatest problems with crime and corruption of any nation in the world. That is because the gospel of salvation has been the primary message.

Contrast Nigeria with Almolonga, Guatemala, where 90 percent of the population is Christian and there are no jails—because they are not needed.

Books like the Left Behind series may be good fictional reading that have some level of truth, but they can instill in our minds a mindset that Christians are to wait for the “great escape” instead of focusing their time and energy on occupying the land and changing the culture. Jesus said He wants to return to a mature bride; that means a vibrant church that is actively impacting our world.

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Is Gay Marriage a Moral Issue or a Civil Liberties Issue?

The battle for the family is heating up with one of the most important issues that could cause a huge tipping point in culture: the redefining of marriage by the Supreme Court.

Can marriage be defined only as a legal relationship between one man and one woman, or can it exist between two consenting adults of the same gender? In 2008, California voters defeated

a proposed amendment that would redefine marriage. However, the battle will not stop at the state level. Gay activists want the U.S. government to redefine marriage. Currently nine states recognize same-sex marriage, and the majority of the population now favors recognition of gay marriage.

Is It a Moral Issue or a Civil Rights Issue?

There are two very different vantage points from which to view the issue of gay marriage that will determine a conclusion: Is it a moral issue or a civil rights issue?

The gay community would like this issue to be defined as a civil rights issue, comparable to what blacks faced during the civil rights movement. However, you can only make this argument by totally removing the moral component.

It's not a sin to be a black person or to live as a black person, according to the Bible. However, the Bible is very explicit about homosexuality being a sin. Comparing this to a civil liberties issue is not comparing apples to apples. If you remove the moral issue and you operate totally as a secular society, then perhaps you can argue this issue purely on a civil basis, which is how our nation has evolved on the subject. However, it's a slippery slope, because then you must recognize the civil liberties of polygamists, pedophiles and any other form of aberrant behavior among people who want equal access and want to be treated equally *without moral consideration*.

Should we legalize sodomy or sexual abuse of children? Why would we not think such a thought? It's because we believe we are dealing with a moral issue. What if a parent and a child are consenting? Just because immoral behavior takes place by two consenting people does not make it OK.

What Is the Basis for Our Moral Compass?

For 200 years, America's moral compass has been rooted in the Bible. The *New England Primer* was a tool used to teach first-

graders. It was first introduced in 1690 and taught for 200 years in America, until 1900. The alphabet was taught with Bible verses that begin with those letters of the alphabet. Lessons had questions about the Bible and the Ten Commandments.

The leadership of our nation and the growing liberalism of our population are signs of a nation that has lost its moral compass. Amazingly, 94 percent of the quotes used by the Founding Fathers who wrote our founding documents had their origin in the Bible, which shows the importance of God's Word in their lives and in this nation's founding. The moral compass for this country was the Bible for 200 years but is its compass no longer. We are now a secular society with some Bible verses and God-talk sprinkled on our currency and government buildings.

When the Defense of Marriage Act was signed in 1996, only 25 percent of the American public supported same-sex marriage; support has increased gradually ever since. California's Proposition 8, passed 52 percent to 48 percent by voters after a controversial campaign in 2008, has been declared unconstitutional by two federal courts but remains in litigation, and polling in 2012 shows 59 percent of California voters approve of same-sex marriage. National polls show that supporters of gay marriage first achieved a majority in 2010. (Taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_opinion_of_same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States)

Mainline Protestants have shifted their views too. In 2003, 42 percent were in favor of gay marriage and 45 percent were opposed. Now, it's 52 percent in favor and 36 percent against. Black protestants are edging in that direction, but are still opposed in significant numbers, with 35 percent in favor and 52 percent against, up from 25 percent in favor and 65 percent against in 2003. The polls make it clear that younger evangelicals support gay marriage in larger numbers than their

elders, but the exact number of supporters is still uncertain. (Taken from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/26/evangelicals-gay-marriage_n_2956917.html)

Public opinion on same sex marriage and unions in the United States thus reveals a great deal of change in a short period of time and significant regional disparity. While New England, the Pacific Coast and the northern Middle Atlantic states may support full-fledged marriage, comparisons of polling from a decade past to today reveals significant growth in support for same-sex marriages and civil unions in those regions. Meanwhile polling from other regions show that while support for same-sex marriages or civil unions has increased across the country, the growth of support is not uniform, with a significantly lower level of support occurring in the Deep South compared to the rest of the country. Given the wide diversity of opinions within the U.S., many supporters of same-sex unions believe that the most accurate way to discuss support for such unions in the United States is on a state-by-state or region-to-region basis. (Taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_opinion_of_same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States)

Tim Keller, a nationally recognized pastor in New York City, explained that “you can believe homosexuality is a sin and still believe that same-sex marriage should be legal.” This is the argument that some religious conservatives are already beginning to make and looks likely to be the position that most evangelicals end up settling on. Articles on changing attitudes among GOP youth illustrate the move toward separating government-sanctioned marriage and church-sanctioned marriage. (Taken from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/26/evangelicals-gay-marriage_n_2956917.html)

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Get Ready to Experience Spiritual Warfare

In C.S. Lewis's book *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape writes to his nephew Wormwood:

"I wonder if you should ask me whether it is essential to keep the patient in ignorance of your own existence. That question, at least for the present phase of the struggle, has been answered for us by the High Command. Our policy, for the moment, is to conceal ourselves."

In the front of the book, Lewis says, "There are two mistakes the church makes when dealing with the devil: to blame everything on him or to blame nothing on him."

Research by the Barna Group found that only 26 percent of the general population believes that Satan is a real spiritual being. Belief in the personhood of Satan appears to be gradually dissipating. Only 52 percent of born-again Christians expressed belief that Satan was real. It's no wonder we have a weak church.

Satan wants to kill you and your destiny, which is rooted in God: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

The enemy tried to kill Moses at birth and tried to shut his mouth through a stuttering spirit. He tried to kill Jesus at birth and then tempted Him during His 40-day fast. He tries to kill all babies through abortion.

If the devil cannot kill at birth, he will try to kill your

destiny through childhood wounds. Whether we are rejected as children through a lack of emotional affirmation, sexually abused or loved only for our performance, our lives become defined by the wounds we receive when we are young. Satan tries to immobilize humans by wounding them so they spend a lifetime trying to cope with the consequences created by their wound. This is how generational strongholds take root in our lives. Because of childhood wounds, we develop a belief system designed to meet our needs outside God, and we protect ourselves from getting hurt by setting up defense mechanisms.

Satan will always attack you in the place of your spiritual inheritance. Israel was attacked because of its land—the Promised Land from God. Abraham was attacked in his relationships, because a people more numerous than the sands in the desert would come through him. That is why Abraham let his nephew Lot choose the land he was to go to.

Jesus was tempted by Satan to receive power instead of laying His life down for the salvation for mankind. Entrepreneurs are attacked by choosing *good* and a consumptive lifestyle versus *God*. Their inheritance lies in creating businesses to create wealth to establish God's kingdom on earth. I've always been attacked in the area of close relationships because my inheritance is in relationships. Each of us must have a heightened awareness of how Satan will seek to derail our destinies, and we must develop a greater sensitivity to Satan's ploys.

In my own journey, I discovered early wounds that kept me from an intimate relationship with my heavenly Father and those close to me. Satan tried to shut me down early in childhood by shutting down my emotions and verbal ability. Over many years, God showed me where the early wounds originated in order for me to become healed from those wounds. The wounds developed a stronghold of shame, rejection, insecurity, fear and control, which led to an inability to share at a heart level. As healing took place, Satan could no longer make me believe a

lie about myself, and I was able to enter into my destiny.

We must recognize the influence the enemy has had in our lives through generational iniquity. In many cases, we may need to revisit early childhood wounds in order to gain healing and victory in our lives where the sins of our fathers may have gained an entry point into our lives. We may require trained counselors to help us.

However, we cannot remain a victim to these wounds once we become aware they are influencing us. Christ paid the price for any sins brought into our life, whether through us or our parents. It is our job to stop them from passing to other generations.

The apostle Paul understood the spiritual warfare that we are all in, no matter how spiritual we are. He describes this in Romans 7:15: "For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do." When he wrote these words, he had been in the faith 20 years!

In Revelation 12, we find the three primary strategies that Satan employs against humans. He tries to kill, deceive and accuse. Most of the time, he uses other humans to do it. Take a moment and think about these three areas. Think about the times you have felt you were at the point of great despair. Think about the times when you were so totally deceived about God. Beware of the strategies of the enemy to kill, deceive, accuse and destroy you, your relationships with others and, most importantly, your relationship with God.

The apostle Paul speaks of strongholds in 2 Corinthians 10:4-6: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."

Although Satan is the source of these strongholds, God's grace will enable us to see the consequences of our behavior and motivate us to find the root causes. We are still responsible for the behavior our stronghold causes and must repent of it. Jesus said the truth will set us free. As you learn the truth about your childhood wounds, God will provide healing that allows you to move forward with Him in your relationship with God and those close to you. Your behavior must begin to change to align with the truth.

The problem for many in the body of Christ today is that we live as if we are not living in a war. We live more like tourists passing through to our destination of heaven. We are not concerned about the casualties of this war, only about getting to our final destination in as pain-free a manner as possible. John Piper once said, "You will not know what prayer is for until you know that life is war." Prayer is the tool of this warfare.

God Fights Through His People

One night I received a particular hateful email from someone close to me. It brought me very low. I could feel Satan trying to bring me into despair through a spirit of accusation. Within five minutes of receiving that email, I got a phone call from a prayer group meeting in Chicago. They had never called me before. They said, "The Lord prompted us that you were going through something very difficult, so we felt we should call and pray for you." They shared a Scripture verse that spoke directly to my situation.

I was reminded of a verse from Isaiah that describes God's ability to fight off any weapons or words that are formed against us if we are in the will of God: "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn" (Is. 54:17). When people speak against us with lies and there is agreement with others, that is a curse being spoken against us. Our response

must be to forgive them and pray for them. That is our defense.

The greater the calling, the greater the warfare and suffering you will experience, but there will be greater revelation of God as well. The apostle Paul understood that his thorn in his flesh was a direct result of the greater call and revelation he was experiencing: "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure."

The greater the influence, the greater the warfare. There is a target on the back of anyone who is seeking to impact the kingdom of darkness for the kingdom of light. I am convinced there are many posters in hell with my picture on it that read: "Wanted: Os Hillman, Dead or Alive." I have inflicted serious damage to the kingdom of darkness for the last 15 years, and I believe that Satan's measured assaults have intensified to hit the very core of what is most important to me. He may have won some battles, but he won't win the war!

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12)

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Are You Part of the Modern-

Day Daniel Generation?

The History Channel is featuring a new multi-part series entitled *The Bible*. It is a selection of dramatized Bible stories from Genesis through the death of Jesus.

Sunday night I watched Part 3 of the series. It featured the story of Daniel and his three friends—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They did a great job portraying what might have happened.

The first scene shows the burning of Jerusalem by the wicked king Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel and his three friends were taken captive, along with the entire nation, to Babylon to be ruled by Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel's reputation preceded him and he was made an adviser to Nebuchadnezzar. He and his friends are described in the second chapter as doing their work 10 times better than anyone else. However, Daniel's stock went way up after the king required that a dream be interpreted by the magicians and advisers, or all the advisers would die. Talk about an unreasonable boss! Daniel approached the king and said God would tell him his dream and the interpretation. That is pretty gutsy!

Daniel went to his friends and explained the situation. They went to God in prayer and God gave Daniel the dream AND the interpretation. Just like the Red Sea parting, Daniel is placed into an impossible situation, humanly speaking. But God gave a supernatural solution.

The result: Daniel and his friends, and the non-believers, were spared. They were given raises and more responsibility. And the God of Abraham was protected in the land.

Later Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship the golden idol Nebuchadnezzar set up. They were thrown into the fiery pit. However, instead of burning up, God protected them

and showed up in the midst of the fire. Their chains were removed and they walked out untarnished. Again, God's name is honored and they are elevated.

Later Daniel serves in the administration of the King of Persia and there is a political smear campaign against Daniel by one of the king's men. They passed a law that no one could pray for thirty days. Daniel refused and was caught praying. He was thrown into the lion's den, but God closed the lion's mouths.

The king had a change of heart because of a dream he had, but got to the dungeon after Daniel had been tossed in. He was there to see Daniel walk out. Again, God's name is protected and he is honored and his accuser is thrown to the lions, except this time they are very hungry!

The moral of these amazing stories is that great stories come from great obedience to God, and great faith and courage. You never have stories told about anyone who played it safe or did not step into an impossible situation. Where is God calling you to step into that requires courage and faith? What problem are you called to solve?

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Mother-Son Bonding – Repairing the Relationship

Breach

Jason Bradshaw grew up in a middle-class home. He was the oldest of three kids and was the only son. His parents loved each other. But when Jason was 12, tragedy struck their family. Jason's father was killed in a car accident. The family was devastated, and Jason's mother grieved for several years.

As Jason got older, his mother poured her life into him. He was the apple of her eye, and she often saw her husband in him as he got older. "He looks much like his father," she thought to herself. His mother doted on Jason, and sometimes Jason reacted to what felt smothering to him.

Jason's mother often prevented Jason from doing things that normal boys of his age do, for fear of him getting hurt or even losing Jason. Gradually, Jason began to feel controlled and manipulated by his mother. This developed into a love-hate relationship with his mom. On the one hand, he knew he was now the male head of the family and wanted to care for his mom, but he hated the control he felt.

Jason began to date girls as he got older and found that he sometimes masturbated to relieve the stress and pent-up desires he felt inside. He also found himself on the internet checking out pornographic pictures. He didn't know why he did this. He just thought it was normal for boys his age.

Jason went on to college and kept a distant relationship between him and his mom. He wanted to respect and care for her, but he wanted to keep his distance and gain his independence. Jason got engaged after college and things were great with his new wife. However, over the next several years he found that there was conflict in his relationship with his wife.

Sometimes he felt the same feelings he felt when he was

growing up with his mother. That feeling of control gave him a sick stomach. He often reacted to his wife when those feelings swelled up inside, "Stop trying to control me," he would say. His wife was surprised at these reactions as she was only trying to connect emotionally with Jason. She wanted to be a part of his life. Jason pulled away each time he felt these feelings.

When Jason and his wife visited his mom, his wife noticed that Jason's personality often changed when the three of them were together. Jason's wife felt like a third wheel. It almost felt like Jason was married to his mother instead of her. This caused arguments among them and Jason often demonstrated a very unloving spirit to his wife. Jason would always defend his treatment of his mother, often at the expense of his wife.

This pattern continued for many years into their marriage. Finally Jason's wife decided they needed professional help. Jason reacted negatively to the idea and felt the only problem they had was his wife kept trying to control him and she needed to stop. However, reluctantly, Jason agreed to go to counseling.

Jason, to his surprise, discovered in the counseling that the reason he reacted to his wife's "control and manipulation" as he perceived it, was due to something that happened in his childhood that related to his mother. The feelings he was feeling were the same feelings he felt when he was a teenager growing up. In essence, Jason was shocked to discover he was subconsciously viewing his wife as his mother. As the truth of his situation unfolded, Jason was able to recognize why he reacted to his wife this way.

Today Jason and his wife are happily married. However, many couples who have the same symptoms often result in divorce. This same scenario happens when a father divorces a wife. The mother is often left emotionally bankrupt and she seeks to meet her emotional needs from her son. However, a son is not

made to emotionally bond with his mother and the pain that is caused within him must be released through some form of sexual expression. That is one reason Jason turned to sex to relieve his emotional pain.

Compounded with this is the legitimate need for Jason to have an emotional connection with a female, but because of his negative perception of his wife, he often sought that emotional connection through women at his workplace or in other social settings. He was often seen as a flirt with women but Jason denied such behavior. This too is rooted in the mother-son bonding relationship.

There is a crisis in marriage today. Research reveals the Christian divorce rate is higher than non-believers. There are many reasons for this, but one of those reasons is rarely spoken about. It has to do with the inappropriate bonding between a mother and her son during his adolescent years.

Many men never emotionally bond to their wives because of the impact of being emotionally bonded to their mothers during their adolescent years. The reason many men are not able to bond with their wives is often due to mother-son bonding that takes place during adolescence.

Dr Paul Hegstrom explains in his book, *Broken Children, Grown Up Pain*, that "a husband without an emotional bond to his wife sees her as someone who sleeps with him, cleans the house, takes care of the children, and works—he doesn't see her as a real, living, emotional person." As a result, the husband is often distant emotionally to his wife, but he does not recognize this in himself. However, his wife definitely knows it. She tries to connect on an emotional level only to be perceived as trying to control him. This leads to conflicts in the relationship.

If the father and mother are not bonded to one another, the mother will often bond to the oldest son. This can happen as a

result of an absent father, either physically or emotionally. If a wife is not getting her emotional needs met through her husband, she may attempt to draw this from her son. If the parenting style is weak in emotional validation, giving words of love, or shaming of the child, these combinations will eventually surface through problems in the marital relationship in adulthood.

Resolving an Inner Conflict

When mothers bond with sons during adolescence, the son rebels against this bonding because he is not wired to bond with any female once they get into adolescence without some form of sexual expression. When they should be growing independent from their mother during this time, they find themselves in bondage to their mother's emotional control. This all happens subconsciously.

Gordon Dalbey, author of *Healing the Masculine Soul*, explains that "beyond the basic fact of initial physical dependence upon the mother, the quality of that bonding experience also influences the son's later relationships with women. If the boy's maternal bond was painful (perhaps his mother didn't want to conceive and thus rejected him) or inappropriate (perhaps she was seductive toward him), the boy may later associate physical bonding to a woman with pain and anxiety.

He then may become compulsive about sex—either as the freewheeling playboy who is incapable of commitment, or the demanding husband who fears being emotionally vulnerable to his wife. Given the biological and emotional intensity of the mother-son bond, only someone whose intrinsic identity with the boy exceeds that of the mother can draw him away into individuality and adult responsibility. Clearly, only the father meets such a requirement."

If unresolved, the young male will seek to rebel against this bonding and control they feel subconsciously. They will have a love-hate relationship toward their mothers during late

adolescence. This can lead young males to masturbate or get into pornography or have premarital sex in their adolescent years as a means of dealing with the emotional pain of that bonding from the mother. The male will eventually pull away from the mother as a result of seeking to become independent from her. This can be traumatic for the mother.

These feelings are often felt subconsciously as the son grows into adulthood. Often an unconscious vow is made to themselves: "I will never be controlled by a woman again." This personal vow can go with them into future dating and marital relationships. The wife will often feel like their legitimate input is being viewed as criticism by the husband and he is resistant to talking with her at an emotional level. The husband will often shut down or rebel against his wife's input.

Dalbey explains that "when a boy reaches puberty, filled with the powerful physical stirrings of his emerging manhood, the father's role becomes critical. If at this point Dad doesn't call the boy out and away from the mother to bond with his masculine roots among men, those stirrings are overtaken by his natural bond with the mother, becoming bound up in her and thus unavailable later to the woman he loves.

"Without the earthly father to call the son out into manhood, the boy grows up seeking manly identity in women—whose voices seem to call him to manhood through sexual conquest. Masculinity grows not out of conquering the woman, but only out of conquering the man—and not another man, as in war, but oneself."

Dalbey explains how this can further affect the man's identity: "Enmeshed with his mother, he may find that his heart is unavailable to another woman to walk with him later as a wife in his life calling (Gen. 2:24). Unable to bond with either a woman in marriage or a man in healthy friendship, he then may fall prey to homosexual impulses."

This is why moral failure can happen even among the most mature Christian men. Despite a commitment to a disciplined Christian life, they have never resolved their inner toil rooted in mother-son bonding and he eventually loses the battle. This is actually God's grace designed to take the male back to the source of his pain to become healed.

Fear of Dependency

Paul Olsen, declares in his book, *Sons and Mothers*, "What a man is frightened of, more than anything else in the vast possibilities of living experience, is dependency, regression to a state in which he becomes an infant in the care of his mother—a mother later unconsciously symbolized by almost all women with whom he comes in contact."

If the son has had any male to male sexual exposure in his childhood, this issue is compounded. Subconsciously he will seek to prove his heterosexuality by bonding to other women outside the marriage. When a dad abandons a son emotionally and physically, he is left to gain that validation elsewhere, often through a female or even another man. If the boy has any male-to-male sexual exposure he will grow into adulthood leaning toward homosexuality or he will have to prove his heterosexuality to himself by getting his validation from women.

The popular comedy TV sitcom series *Everybody Loves Raymond* is a classic portrayal of two sons who have been doted on by their mother and conflict consistently arises between the loyalty of the sons at the expense of their wives. The father is emotionally bankrupt and emotionally abuses the mother. The mother seeks to get her emotional needs met from Raymond, the favored son. Many of the situations are quite humorous, but sadly, are portrayed very accurately as to the depth of the problem.

Ken Nair, author of *Discovering the Mind of a Woman*, cited a

perfect example of this when counseling a couple and the husband was reacting to his wife's treatment of his wife. "I'm thinking of a situation where a wife said, 'On Mother's Day, you made sure that your mother got to sit at the head of the table and was waited on first.' He retaliated, 'Well, it was Mother's Day!' His wife defensively said, 'I'm a mother! In fact, I'm the mother of your children. But that doesn't seem to carry any weight with you!' He illustrated his deafness to her spirit by saying, 'I'm not going to stop loving my mother just to make you happy!'"

This man always gave deference to his mother's needs at the expense of his wife's. The husband was never emotionally bonded to his, but was still bonded to his mother. When this happens the husband will pull away from his wife because he subconsciously views her as his mother who he believes is trying to control him. Whenever a son's behavior changes in the presence of the mother and the wife feels like a third wheel, you can be confident there is a mother-son bonding issue that exists.

This usually results in the son bonding to other women outside the marriage in a subconscious attempt to deal with the pain of the mother-son bonding. He is often a flirt with other women usually unknowingly. Subconsciously he is meeting an emotional need in himself to prove his manhood through other women.

John Eldredge shares a very personal account of his discovery of similar deep rooted issues he described in his book, *Wild at Heart*. He discovered what happens when a man cannot offer himself emotionally to his wife. "If the man refuses to offer himself, then his wife will remain empty and barren. A violent man destroys with his words; a silent man starves his wife. 'She's wilting,' a friend confessed to me about his new bride. 'If she's wilting then you're withholding something,' I said. Actually, it was several things—his words, his touch, but mostly his delight. There are so many other ways this plays

out in life. A man who leaves his wife with the children and the bills to go and find another, easier life has denied them his strength. He has sacrificed them when he should have sacrificed his strength for them.”

The Father Wound

Another reason that we are seeing more moral failure today is due to the fatherless generation that was ushered in through the baby boomer generation. Since the 1960s we have seen a steady increase in divorce and fatherless families. This has created an open wound in both men and women today.

Bill Clinton’s sexual indiscretions with Monica Lewinsky in the White House brought shame to him, his family, and the nation. To make matters worse, he tried to cover it up by lying to the American people on national television, and later explained it away as “not being sex.” Clinton will forever be remembered in the history books for his indiscretions. Dalbey explains:

“The shame from moral failure in men urges men into a variety of compulsive/addictive behaviors—from drugs and pornography to workaholism and religious legalism. In hiding his wound, the man eventually fulfills the awful impact of the Malachi 4:6 curse upon the land, from abortions and sexually transmitted diseases to crime and domestic violence. He’s left fearful of women, distrusting of other men, shortsighted in his view of God and, therefore, cut off from his destiny.

“In a classic example, during the shameful exposure of former President Clinton’s sexual sins, few political commentators noted that his father had died when Clinton was in his mother’s womb, and that his several step-fathers were alcoholic and/or abusive. With such a deep wound in his masculine soul and the constant negative models at hand to fill it, the boy could only grow up looking for security in the one constant relationship, namely, his mother. He thereby

learned to seek confirmation of his manhood from women. But since no woman is capable of doing that, and if he never goes to Father God with his wound, he's condemned to the eternally fruitless exercise of going from one woman to another seeking his manhood.

"The nation has paid dearly for this with a skepticism and even scorn for his leadership and authority. Certainly Clinton must be held accountable for his choices and eventually suffer their consequences. But—as destructive as the father-wound is—there's not enough brick and mortar to build enough prisons to hold the men who are acting it out. It's a deadly epidemic among us, which hides in the shadow of shame."

Tiger Woods

In December 2009 Tiger Woods' world went from a polished, protected family-friendly persona to a womanizer, shamed and gossiped about throughout the tabloid media due to moral failure and infidelity in his marriage. One of the questions that can often come up when someone like Tiger Woods, who seemingly had the world by the tail (pardon the pun), is "How could he ever want to go look outside his marriage with such a beautiful wife?"

Tiger fits the profile of a man deeply affected by mother-son bonding. Tiger is an only son. His parents divorced after he was an adult, but most likely the marriage had been weak for many years before the final divorce. It was well known that Earl Woods was not faithful to his wife.

Dina Parr, Tiger Woods' high school sweetheart, said in an interview that Tiger would call her crying, upset about his father Earl Woods' infidelity. Parr said Tiger would call her and say, "'My dad is with another woman' ... He would be so upset, so I just tried to be there for him and listen to him.'" Parr went on to say that Tiger loved his father, but he never really got over the unfaithfulness and that it's

interesting that Tiger is now doing the same thing.

We often saw Tiger and his mother together and the bond between them must have been very strong. This would have meant Tiger may never have really bonded with his wife Elin, and probably never dealt with the emotional pain from the bonding of his mother. This ultimately would have to lead to resolving the inner conflict in inappropriate ways sexually as he got older. Chances are that because Tiger never really bonded with his wife Elin during the marriage he sought to bond with women outside the marriage through sex.

Symptoms of a Nurturing Void

If a son grows up in a family that fails to nurture him in his early years with appropriate touch, cuddling and affection, that child will grow into an adult with a greater sexual appetite in the marriage. He will associate sex with being loved by his spouse because he was never touched growing up. He will want to be touched and cuddled in the bedroom but will not want to be touched outside intimate times.

He will find it difficult to give hugs, hold hands or give healthy affection to his spouse. Sometimes a spouse may wrongly conclude her husband has a sexual addiction because of his desire for sex. If there is no pattern of pornography, he does not have a sexual addiction in his life. He has a love and nurturing problem that he never got as a child. Consequently, he will seek to have that need met through his spouse. However, she can never adequately satisfy his need. That's because it's a love need that requires healing from his heavenly Father. Until that is met in him he will continue to place pressure upon his wife to meet his sexual needs.

How Men and Women Deal With Pain

When there are emotional unmet needs in a relationship it can lead to a breach in the marital relationship and the husband and wife learn to cope in two different ways. Larry Crabb has

summarized how both male and female use unique strategies to avoid the deep pain when a failure in trust happens.

All of us are trapped by addiction to a desire for something less than God. For many women, that something less is relational control. "I will not be hurt again and I will not let people I love be hurt. I'll see to it that what I fear never happens again." They therefore live in terror of vulnerably presenting themselves to anyone and instead become determined managers of people. Their true femininity remains safely tucked away behind the walls of relational control.

More common in men is an addiction to non-relational control. "I will experience deep and consuming satisfaction without ever having to relate meaningfully with anyone." They keep things shallow and safe with family and friends and feel driven to experience a joy they never feel, a joy that only deep relating can provide. Their commitment is twofold: to never risk revealing inadequacy by drawing close to people and, without breaking that commitment, to feel powerful and alive. Power in business and illicit sex are favorite strategies for reaching that goal.

What You Cover, God Uncovers

When Tiger tried to cover up his sin, he only made the humiliation factor grow in his situation. If he had been forthright by repenting in the beginning the level of humiliation would have been less severe.

If you are a believer and you live in compromise, you lose confidence in the faith dimension of your life. The Bible says we are to confess our sins one to another. The very act of bringing your struggle into the light brings healing. My friend Ford Taylor often says "What we cover, God uncovers. What we uncover, God 'covers.'" If we try to hide our sin Satan has a legal right to humiliate us and will do so publicly. The more public a figure you are, the greater the

humiliation. If you choose humility by initiating repentance, God will cover you by His grace and your restoration will be quicker.

Why Won't He Talk to Me?

If the mother-son bonding remains unresolved, the negative behavior becomes a part of his personality at a subconscious level as he grows older. Until he is conscious that his behavior is abnormal he lives in a world of independence, denial and conflict until he understands there is a problem. The wife struggles with thoughts and feelings like, "Why won't he talk to me? Why is he so defensive to my input?"

The way out of this is to come to the knowledge of the truth for the husband. The scripture says that the truth shall make you free. Men need God to heal their hearts of the pain in their lives that has been caused by this bonding and repent of the pain they caused their mates through their behavior. God will often force us into a crisis in our marriages to deal with the issue. The husband must deal with both the root and his behavior. He must acknowledge his failure to love his wife because the spirit behind this issue is an unloving spirit rooted in the mother-son bonding. He must actually tell himself "She is not my mother, she is my wife!"

Most men will not begin to change until they can understand the problem. It is not enough to complain to your partner that something is wrong. Until the man understands the reason for the problem and the way to fix it, he will not have the motivation to change. This is important because if our heart is not healed we will try to solve the problem through performance in order to relieve the pressure, but the root issue will never be healed. And the temptation for men is to get their validation as men from their wives or other women instead of God.

There is another factor at play here as well. If a son grows

up under a mother who is volatile and angry he will grow up fearing a woman's anger. The father often withdraws from his wife's outbursts, often abandoning the son to her emotional fits. The son grows up fearing confronting any woman for fear of conflict and possible outbursts, and fears the woman will leave him. By succumbing to these fears the boy grows up to be a man who abdicates his strength to the woman. This can open the door to a "Jezebel Spirit" in the marriage. "Ahab" yields leadership to the woman in the home.

The solution to this is for the man to exercise his true manly strength through servant leadership. Usually the woman will resist his new strength at first because she will perceive it to threaten her control over the man. A godly woman must come to a place of recognition that she actually needs his strength and will ultimately desire more of this. An ungodly woman, who has simply replaced his mother in this scenario, will leave him.

A Word to Mothers

If you are a mother and want to know how to avoid falling into the trap of mother-son bonding, the key is to ask yourself a question as it relates to the way you relate to your son. "Am I trying to get an emotional need met for myself by how I relate to my son, or am I trying to help my son grow up into a mature man?"

Often you will discover whether your relationship is healthy or not by simply asking this question. A mother must help her son enter into manhood. She must find ways that he can interact with other men who can help him develop into a healthy man. The Jewish bar mitzvah is a way the Jewish culture helps a young man recognize his manhood by his father. It is a rite of passage every young man needs.

The mother must let go of her son emotionally and encourage the separation to take place as he enters into his late teen

years. If you do this, you will find your son will develop into an emotionally healthy male. Healthy relationships with other male figures are needed in the boy's life to invite him into manhood.

A Word to Adult Sons

If you are a husband/adult son and recognize that you have been impacted by mother-son bonding you must make some immediate changes. You have never effectively "leaved and cleaved" to your wife emotionally. You may or may not have to speak with your mother about this issue. However, you must begin to:

Set boundaries with your mother. She must know that your wife is first priority in your life. This can be a difficult transition for many men because it will feel like you are betraying your mother, but you are not. You are cutting one unhealthy bond so you can love and emotionally bond to your wife.

Ask your wife to help you. Ask your wife for input. Tell her to let you know when she is feeling like a third wheel when in her and your presence. Your vulnerability will prove to your wife you are serious about changing.

Invite input from your wife. Mother-son bonding creates a "feeling" of being controlled by your wife when she may simply be trying to connect emotionally. You will have to consciously say out loud to yourself when you have internal feelings that you feel controlled, "She is my wife, not my mother." Eventually those feelings will dissipate as you love your wife emotionally.

A Final Word to Men

The enormous increased level of dysfunction in our society due to absent fathers and broken marriages has ushered in a generation of adults who carry a lot of brokenness and pain.

Men, it is important to recognize the subtle lie the enemy of our soul tells us. That lie is "I cannot live without her." We have elevated a woman's sexuality to the point of idolatry in our culture.

The more you have been impacted by the mother-son bonding, the more you are prone to buy into this lie. Our source of strength cannot be the fair-haired woman; this can only be met by God if we are going to be Godly men. Healthy marriage can meet legitimate needs of both partners, but God must be our source for both spouses.

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