

5 Steps to Succeed Over Secret Sin

When I first came to Christ, a tract titled "I'll Never Tell Anyone I Have a Problem With..." caught my attention. I was not alone. It helped multitudes get free from sexual sin.

When we face besetting sins that seem to have a stranglehold on our lives, it can seem like we'll never break through to victory. Yet if we align with His will, draw upon His grace daily and continue to persevere in faith, we can succeed!

Does this apply to the seductions of sexual sin? What about masturbation? For those who have walked this path, it can be an agonizing and guilt-producing experience, crippling one's relationship with God.

There is hope! There is also the authoritative promise of the Bible enabling us to face this area with unwavering confidence: "No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, and He will not permit you to be tempted above what you can endure, but with the temptation will also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13).

Society Encourages This

A well-intentioned leader attempts to bring relief to individuals ensnared in masturbation saying, "Periodic release of sexual tension through masturbation may be OK for the single person... Compulsive masturbation is a sin; periodic release of sexual tension when you don't have a spouse is not." This is mild compared to propaganda in public schools today on this subject along with acceptance of pornography, recreational marijuana and sexual activity.

Here's the Biblical perspective that can bring liberation to

multitudes struggling specifically with solo sex. I also encourage everyone to watch the 4-minute video on the topic, "Masturbation" and read chapter 14 in my companion book, "Bullseye."

5 Transformative Truths

1. Guard against justifying sinful behavior.

All of us need to be careful we don't yield to rationalization in difficult areas of the Christian life. Scripture teaches that "The heart is more deceitful than all things and desperately wicked; who then can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9).

Due to our fallen nature, all of us have the proclivity to find ingenious excuses for unrighteous behavior.

How many times have I engaged in conversations with professing Christians who find amazingly clever ways to justify indulging in casual sex; smoking marijuana; consenting to an abortion; sexting; living together ("ours are special circumstances which God understands"); or viewing sexually explicit films and even a gay/homosexual lifestyle.

2. Resist dangerous deception to disregard biblical standards.

In our sex-saturated culture there are a multitude of voices sharing their perspectives. Liberal Christian ministers seeking popularity proclaim, "Masturbation is actually a gift of God" (exact quote).

Today sex-education classes, advice columnists and even the World Health Organization encourage masturbation, plus abortion and homosexuality, to children and teens worldwide. Doesn't it make sense to have sound, biblical counsel amidst all the questionable advice bombarding us from every corner?

A Biblical worldview on sexuality seems foolish to pop-culture proponents, yet to those desiring to please God and live holy it brings peace, joy and freedom! Ephesians 5:3, 12 calls us

to jettison any “sexual immorality, or any impurity” and, “For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.”

3. Scripture celebrates sexual pleasure between married partners.

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven... a time to embrace and a time to refrain... He has made everything beautiful in its appropriate time” (Eccl. 3:1;5;11).

God “richly gives us all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17) but instructs us, “Do not stir up or awaken love” before the proper time. (Song 8:4)

4. God’s wisdom directs the unmarried to develop self-control (Gal.5:23) preparing us for a successful marriage.

“You remember the instructions we gave you in the name of the Lord Jesus. God’s plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean-cut with sexual immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect” (1 Thess.4:2-4, J.B. Phillips).

What is the primary reason marriages break up? Sexual problems? Adultery? Anger and abuse? Financial issues? Emotional problems? No, the number one reason is simply a lack of self-control which adversely impacts all these areas.

Proverbs 25:28 reminds us, “He who has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls.”

In marriage one must also forgo sexual activity because of sickness, pregnancy or travel. Self-controlled individuals who cultivate this character quality before marriage reap the dividends in marriage! I say this from the perspective of over 47 years of a wonderful covenant marriage in Christ!

5. Jesus came to forgive sins and free us from sin’s power

(Rom. 6:6-7)!

Scores of Christians suffer from addiction to sexual sin and needless condemnation because they've never been taught this unbelievable, biblical reality. Like slaves who were ignorant of the Emancipation Proclamation or believed it simply was too good to be true, followers of Jesus can remain ensnared by besetting sins until they grasp this life-changing truth.

Christians are not to be mastered by anything—that includes masturbation! Scripture cautions us about individuals who “entice by the lusts of the flesh” promising “freedom” but keeping people in sexual bondage because “by that which a man is overcome, to this he is enslaved” (2 Pet. 2:18-19). Jesus told us if we “remain in My word... You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free (John 8:31-32)!

Reject the Lies and Rise to Victory!

It's a lie when we hear: “There's nothing sinful or harmful about pornography or masturbation. It's just a natural way to relieve sexual tension and pleasure oneself.”

It's also a lie to believe, “I'm trapped. I can't stop. I'll never break free from this unforgivable sin.”

Here's the Deal: If you're tired of Satan manipulating you to walk in defeat, condemnation and uncleanness, then reject his lies, repent of unbelief and passivity regarding this temptation being too difficult to overcome.

Like Job, make a “covenant with my eyes” (Job 31:1). “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. 2:22). Spend consistent time in the Word of God (“How shall a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to your Word” ()).

Don't plan to fall, but if you do, immediately arise to

repent, receive forgiveness and continue your journey to live in victory. You “can do all things because of Christ who strengthens you” (Phil. 4:13)! {eoa}