

Kenny Luck: Adult Entertainment, Old Flames and Intimacy

Because I speak everywhere to men, it's so funny whenever a guy starts off a conversation with me by saying: "What if a person, what if a friend of mine contacted his old girlfriend on Facebook?"

"You contacted your old girlfriend on Facebook, I reply, and you are all conflicted because you have a gold ring around your finger." They look at me like I'm Yoda. It is truly an epidemic.

As I have talked about many times with many men's groups, when you don't have the character to meet the reality of your current relationship, and you are not connecting physically in that relationship, then you are wide open to the danger of connecting with someone who doesn't demand any character from you in order to connect with them mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically.

Why?

Because it feels better, it's that simple. When you feel bad, you want to feel better. Anyone who gives a man strokes when he's struggling to work something out, that's tough. That's why when guys travel, they turn on LodgeNet.

Have you guys ever been in a hotel room? It's "after hours" entertainment. You are there to attend a Christian men's conference, but now it's after hours. If you hear me speak at a Christian men's conference and things aren't going well at home, are you more or less open to that? Are you open to that?

Then there's this whole issue of old girlfriends, old flames.

Old flames will help you go down in flames. Even with new girls who are friends, there are opportunities for issues. Here we have these surveys saying that sexual satisfaction comes most often from one person and monogamy. And yet the caricature is that there is something so much more exciting and so much better outside of that.

Consider this. A total of 73 percent of men said that if male birth control was available, they would take it. One last statistic says that 100 percent of all men throughout history have masturbated at least one time. So, can we just get that on the table: whether you're single, married, or married a long time, you don't have to feel weird.

Let's talk about me for a second. If I'm going to talk about sex, the truth has to come out.

I'm from a Navy brat family of seven, and the son of a third generation alcoholic. My good friend down the block at age 10 had a tree fort in the creek, with a stack of *Playboys*. That was my first experience with anything sexual.

I have to tell you, and a lot of you guys know exactly what I'm talking about, that first experience of seeing the female form without clothes on was explosive. It's like crack. At 10 years old, it was a magnet pulling me to the "wow, look at this!" What is that? How do I relate to that? What do I do with that? What's going on down there? I had never felt that before in my life.

There's this thing called family formation, especially in a boy's relationship with his father. It's the male relationship in the family that is formative for sons and daughters. The love and approval expressed in the time, talk, and touch that goes from father to son and father to daughter forms their sexual identity.

It's that sexual identity and the understanding of themselves as male or female, socialized by gender, family relationships,

anatomy and modeling, and if it is tenuous, then those children are very vulnerable to sexual exploitation and sexual experimentation at a very early age.

Now let's turn the microscope back on me. Last of seven kids, son of a third-generation alcoholic, my dad was a ghost, there's the tree fort, Calabasas Creek, *Playboys*. No wonder seeing that stuff for the very first time was so explosive for me.

Offers from peers at a very early age to experience sexuality—I'm talking about elementary school here—that's heavy stuff. But for the vulnerable child, who has had low time and touch with the father, to then have someone offering them a form of intimacy, it's very attractive. It's compelling.

Why? God made us to give and receive love, to experience it. When we are not experiencing love and affirmation, then we are open to experiencing it in an unhealthy way, and that's my story.

I was out in the neighborhood and very vulnerable. I got a job at age 14 at a liquor store after being exposed to pornography at a very early age. I was very vulnerable. I got a job at Oak Tree Liquors.

Why? My Dad was the number one customer at Oak Tree Liquors, and that's why I got the job. How many parents would let their kid work at a liquor store at the age of 14 being an eighth grader? In my family, there wasn't a healthy family formation. I'm bagging ice at Oak Tree Liquors. I'm a Navy brat and I know how to work. I'm feather dusting the beer and wine shelves before Sunday football games. I know how to tally the register, but unfortunately, on Sundays the liquor store is only busy prior to football game and at halftime.

It gets really slow in the afternoon. That's when you have your choice of magazines to "read" in the liquor store, at 14

years of age. Here I am developing sexually. No role model. No mentor. No messaging.

I never had the sex talk. I'm very vulnerable. I'm out there. I'm working. I'm being mentored by my peers instead of my parents. I'm having encounters with my peers as a young man. Culture is chasing me, even in that time. It's there with pornography and other distortions of sexual expressions.

This leads to sexual experimentation. In the ways that young boys growing into men do it, whether that is masturbating or dating relationships, you have to understand that below the waterline there is a man forming, a man who God has designed and given a gift to express himself sexually, who needs to understand it spiritually and emotionally. He puts me in a family to help form me, and to see how it's worked out, but because of sin and brokenness, the family is AWOL and broken. I'm like an orphan out there swimming in an ocean of desires, wants, acceptance and approval.

I get to junior high and high school. It might as well be college in junior high school. Why? God made me to give and receive love. He has made me a sexual creature. I'm developing anatomically and biologically with a lot of testosterone.

But I'm being mentored by my peers and by culture instead of by Christ and my father. And so, that leads to other encounters. Not because I wanted the sex, I just wanted the intimacy.

That's something fundamental that you have to understand as we approach this whole topic of sex. It's the difference between intimacy and sex. I just want to know that somebody cares about me. The fact that I had to do it in a certain way or had to experience it externally and internally in a certain way is not as consequential as the fact that God has built you to give and receive love. He wants you to experience healthy expressions of that until your last heartbeat.

At seventeen, I become a Christian. I'm feeling a lot of the consequences of unhealthy sexual development and the guilt associated with that behavior. I asked Christ into my life and one of the best things about knowing Jesus is that he washes you clean. He washes you clean of everything at the cross.

It's a beautiful and glorious thing to know Jesus and to know that whatever sin and shame you carry around today, whatever hurt might have come to you or other people in your past, especially related to this issue of sexuality, that you are forgiven. When you see a living New Testament human being, you see a living God walking among men on earth and ministering to those who feel shame because of their sin, particularly the people who have sexual issues. I experienced the cleansing of Jesus.

I now have a new battle. I'm walking around not sure if I'm loved. I'm searching for it. I find a God who says he loves me unconditionally, and forgives me. He provides grace and mercy for my past. That's an awesome thing, and I get heaven thrown in too.

Now I'm going to start living for Him, but I still have this trailing deep hole in my soul with respect to intimacy. God is beginning to fill it, but I still have a long way to go before it goes from my head into my heart. I go to college and I start toeing the line living for God, but privately I'm still struggling with sexual addiction, masturbation, lust and fantasy. I'm a Christian. I love God and I'm struggling sexually, just as all normal 18- to 20-year olds do.

I married my college sweetheart, Chrissie Watson, and we've been married for more than 25 years now. Early on in the marriage, I'm walking around with some of these issues. I remember I discovered there is power in openness, power in transparency, when it comes to this issue of sexuality, my mind, lust, and fantasy. Getting with a group of guys and talking about it, and not feeling so weird, but also getting

some help and counsel from guys who have overcome.

I remember working through this little book. It asked about what is your greatest struggle and blah, blah, blah. I had it in my briefcase all the time. I was working on it and it was private.

I left the book on the counter and went on a business trip. Chrissie comes into the kitchen and says: "Huh, what's this?"

She breaks out with an "OH MY GOD!"

I come home from the business trip and guess who is standing on the porch as I get out of the car? Guess who is standing in the middle of the door holding the book? You know what the book says on the front of it now? NO SEX FOR YOU! No, it didn't say that, but I tell you what, talk about shrinkage, that was some major masculine shrinkage.

What was great about it was that it did open the door to talk about the issue. I said look, the reason that's stuff is in there because I am God's man, I love the Lord. I love you. I love our kids. I am battling to slay my demons. I don't look at women the way most men look at women. I'm really battling to win my heart, my mind, and my soul because I want the healthiest sexual experience in my life that shows love for God, love for you and love for my children.

As important as you are, Jesus Christ is more important to me, and my accountability is to Him. The first few seconds of my presence in His presence, I want as few things as possible in my life to dishonor Him. Do you know what she needed to hear? That I was working on it. She needed to hear that I was after it, that I wanted to honor God.

Let's talk about God for a second. Let's get some starter thoughts going. The first starter thought in this whole sex series thing is GOD IS NOT AGAINST SEX: sexual expression, sexual fun, sexual pleasure.

He is against misusing it and misunderstanding it. Who does that apply to: if you are single and you're thinking about getting married? That definitely applies to you single men: body, mind and spirit.

Does it apply to you, married man? Absolutely. Newly married men, it applies to you, too. God wants a fulfilled life for you and all of your buddies who have been married 10, 20, 30 years. He wants a fulfilled sex, love and intimacy life for all married men for as long as humanly possible. That is His will. Hallelujah!

A lot of you reading this are really struggling with me saying this right now. When I talk to a man and I want to know the health of his marriage, a lot of times I go to the sex question. Healthy sexual expression in marriage follows healthy emotional connection, healthy aesthetic connection, and healthy spiritual connection. It's the light that comes on when other strong connections in a marital relationship need some work.

I realize that we are busy, ok? That also factors in here. God is not against sex. He's against misusing it. In 1 John 4:16, God says: "So we know and rely on the love that God has for us. God is love, whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them" (NIV).

God is love and He expects love to motivate us so that we can love Him, love others, and love ourselves in the right way. He knows that when we misuse His desire to give and receive love, it produces regret, guilt, shame and sin. God is love. He loves us; therefore He wants us to experience His gift of sex. We are called to love Him back and to love people.

That is why God is against misusing sex, as a single, married or single-again man or woman, because it doesn't represent His best love toward you. It doesn't bring out your best love toward Him, others and yourself.

Jesus said to love the Lord your God in Matthew 22:37: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind."

Not only does God's expression of love toward you include wanting you to have a healthy sexual life. He wants you to show love back to Him and love Him in every area of your life: heart, mind, soul and strength. This is probably the number one issue for men, for all men: single, married or divorced.

God knows where your sex life exists on a practical level. Men are like icebergs. You only see the tip. The tip is our image, our projection; it's who we want people to perceive we are. Below the waterline is who we really are, and that's where the substance of an iceberg lies, beneath the waterline.

God knows you very specifically. Your savior Jesus, your maker Jesus, your Lord Jesus, your Messiah Jesus, knows where your sexuality exists on a practical level. Jesus says in Matthew 5:28 about knowing you at a deep level sexually: "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Principally, that's Jesus going: "Hey guys, guess what, I know your culture. You have heard it said don't commit adultery, but I say to you, it's not what you are presenting out here whether you're a Christian or non-Christian, or whether you are Mr. Goody Two Shoes or Mr. Bad Boy. I know where you live sexually, and it's internal. It's an internal, spiritual, mental process and that's the area I'm looking at; whatever area you are throwing out there, it doesn't matter. I see what other people don't see about your sexually and that's the area I want to address."

So God knows. That's the second thought. First, God is not against sex, He's against misusing it. Second, God knows where your sex life exists on a practical level. Single man, God knows where it exists in private. You know that room of your

life, and you need to open the door to Him. I know it's private and personal. I know there's a lot of shame there. I know that there are a lot of emotions there. I know there are a lot of desires there.

Married men, He knows you have conflicts in marriage. He knows that you are married to a broken gal. She's broken like you are broken. He doesn't want you to take your ball off the sexual playground of your marriage just because you are working something out. Don't go from a 40-year-old back to a 14-year-old sexually, to porn or to other women.

For you divorced men, maybe there are some issues there with your first marriage. You know what, maybe you need to work on a few things so that the sexual expression in your life will be good. He knows where your sex life exists now.

You older brothers, you may have lost a little of your libido, but your mind is very alive. Just ask the girl in my wife's Bible study who works as a lifeguard at the Leisure World retirement community. She gets hit on by so many Leisure World guys it's unbelievable. So don't give me baloney about this, because it's not just external. It's internal. Jesus told us where it really exists and He wants to be Lord over that so you don't hurt yourself and other people.

Click to read Part 1 and Part 2 of this series.

Note: This is the third in a four-part series Every Man Ministries is calling "The Sex Series," where God's men receive the best from God's gift of sexual intimacy. Sex is physical, mental and spiritual, and God wants us to use this gift in the way He intended it to be enjoyed. This series will help you understand sex through the lens of Scripture. It will teach you to understand what God expects from His sons when it comes to sex and sexual intimacy.

Kenny Luck is the founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church. His 20th book, *Sleeping*

Giant: No Movement of God Without Men of God, is the proven blueprint for men's ministries and was recently released through B&H Publishing. Watch and read more of Kenny's teaching at . Follow Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everymm) and YouTube.

Sign up now to receive Every Man Ministries' FREE Email Newsletter.