

Root Sources for Derailed Sexual Development

Many today find themselves infested with strongholds of sexual bondage and wonder how it could have happened. They've tried every way they know to get free but nothing has worked. That may be because they haven't properly identified the roots and seriously engaged the almighty God to lead them from deliverance to freedom.

Let's look at major influences that lead to sexual bondage and brokenness.

Improper Role Modeling by Authority Figures

We were designed to take on the attributes of those in authority over us – absorbing their values, behaviors and customs. It is built into our nature.

Those who grow up with dysfunctional parents or who live in other harmful environments will eventually grow to resent their lot in life and will often blame the God who caused them to be born into such a situation. They will see God as unfair and uncaring, and may nurse a stronghold of anger that they draw upon to justify sinful lifestyles.

Inherited Generational Sins

The Bible is very clear that the sins of the fathers are passed down to the third and fourth generation of those who hate God. This is a strange concept because it seems to unfairly penalize children for sins committed by their parents or grandparents. It is a picture of how iniquity works in "covenantal" relationships.

God has made a way of escape, however, for that child who decides he or she is no longer going to follow in such sinful

ways and who turns to the Lord to be set free. The Bible says that God will break the curse of the fathers from that generation.

In ministering to them, we must challenge such persons to:

- renounce the sin-line of their parents;
- declare that they are no longer going to participate in such works of iniquity;
- ask God to break the curse that is over them and set them free from the resultant bondage and brokenness.

The Influence of Teachers

A third major influence for improper sexual development in a growing child can be his or her teachers. If they fill their minds with lies, they will believe them. If they teach them that the Word of God is wrong, they will accept it, even against the witness of their conscience.

Some teachers affirm the wrong things, such as sexual promiscuity, trans or homosexual tendencies, rebellion against parents or unbelief. Worse still, a teacher who sexually molests a student causes great damage. It is the juxtaposition of such factors with authority that makes the subterfuge so destructive.

The Influence of Friends

If our friends exert a godly influence on us, we will tend to conform to their thinking and behavior. Similarly, if they fill our minds with sinful knowledge and entice us with things that feed our fleshly nature, we will tend to mimic that influence in order to become accepted by them.

Friends can also cause us to form negative self-perceptions. They are often highly competitive and wield power through criticisms, intimidation, comparisons, gossip, etc.. The more

we look up to and admire our accusers, the more power their words have on us to create negative self-perceptions and behaviors.

The Influence of Heroes

Face it – our early years are spent identifying with and trying to become like our heroes. Because our culture is steeped in idolatry, sports figures, rock stars, media stars and admired friends have an enormous power to sway our self-perceptions.

The “fall” of a hero provides the ammunition we need to justify our own fall. We say to ourselves, “If my hero turns to substance abuse or immorality in times of pain or sadness, then who am I to resist those same temptations?” In fact, “If the one who has embodied everything I have ever dreamed of being finds comfort and justification in sinful behavior, then it must be okay!”

The Influence of Outsiders

Many kids have the unfortunate experience of meeting outsiders who do great damage to their sense of identity. A man who rapes a boy can be the cause of later sexual identity confusion or pedophilia in that boy. The one who shares pornography with a child can be the catalyst for a host of sexual obsessions, depending on variables like:

- age of exposure
- kind of pornography
- individual reaction in the soul and spirit of that child
- spiritual and emotional health of the child

Abuse by outsiders can be especially traumatizing to those with a sensitive nature. They are plunged into a dark and secret world of fear where their sense of well being and moral

equilibrium are harshly compromised, and without apparent remedy.

The Influence of the Media

The greatest negative influence in our culture today is the media. In the secrecy of his bedroom, any five-year-old can view the most perverted pornography ever envisioned by the mind of man. Child and other hardcore pornography can be accessed on gigantic platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Yet America yawns; no one seems to care!

Even cartoons by Disney, action movies by Marvel, TV programs by Nickelodeon and other purveyors of children's media now contain positive depictions of heroes who live immoral lives.

All of this wreaks horrible damage to a child's mind, heart and moral development.

The Influence of Self-Judgments

Self-judgments are natural byproducts of self-hatred forged in us by critical, legalistic authority figures. The result: We become our own worst judges when facing failure. We condemn ourselves in expectation of the condemnation (real or imagined) that we believe will come our way.

Eventually, we reach such an emotionally damaged state that we purposely sin out of anger at being so sparsely affirmed and so harshly judged. Feeling justified, we throw temper tantrums over being given the impossible task of living a righteous life in our own strength.

The core sin is often twofold: failing to honor our parents because of their failings and refusing to believe in God's goodness. We presume that our judgment of the case is more valid than God's (Job 38:4) and we believe that we are wiser than God (1 Cor. 1:20), which is the cardinal sin of pride (Prov. 16:18).

The fundamental error is that we choose to believe what our experiences say about God and our value in His eyes rather than what God actually says, thinks and feels.

The Influence of Childhood Vows

When we are hurt, we react from an immature sense of justice. We desire justice but know nothing of grace. And so, we condemn, hold grudges, pass sentences, dishonor and make vows against those who have caused our pain – vows that remain hidden in our subconscious for decades before emerging under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

I used to hate my father. One night as I was praying, the Lord pointed out that that hatred was the primary foundation for my own self-hatred. Forgiveness and the renouncing of childhood vows is vital in the healing process. You cannot proceed to health and maturity without it.

The Influence of the Sinful Heart of Man

A major source of improper sexual development is the evil heart of man (Mark 7:20-23). We are born with it, which is why we must be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3ff). Parents, teachers, friends, heroes and strangers may be major contributors to our sexual sin issues, but they build on a foundation that we alone are accountable for – a human heart that is complicit with sin.

Being born again by receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the start of fixing the problem. When we give our hearts and lives to Him, a supernatural change takes place within us. We become born from above and receive a new heart!

The Influence of the Demonic Realm

Satan and his minions are a virulent force for aberrant childhood development. Their influence is derivative, opportunistic and fueled by lies. They use the ground that we

(or those who have covenantal influence over us) give them to exacerbate the damage caused by sinful choices.

Being demonized is not so much a matter of spatial occupation as it is degree of influence. A demonized person can come to Christ and receive deliverance but they can also surrender ground to the demonic realm through sinful acts.

Demonizing spirits gain influence over us according to the degree and length of participation in a sin. This is particularly true of knowing, willful and defiant sin. Should I continue at length in this way, the likelihood of a demonic outcome increases significantly.

It is common for a victim of abuse to make bitter judgments and vows or to pass condemning sentences against God and others. Although such reactions may be understandable, they remain sinful and allow demons to gain influence. Repentance and forgiveness are crucial.

Demons may gain ground if a child's legal head "uncovers" him or her. If the father or mother abuses the child, for example, his or her spiritual covering is compromised, enabling demonic powers to become involved. Believing children have recourse to God for His covering but they often refuse to go there out of anger at Him for having allowed the abuse to happen.

We may attract demonic powers by viewing sin however innocently. Many sex addicts tell of how their first exposure to pornography, though completely innocent, created a bondage to such images. Many a voyeur will tell similar stories of innocently glancing into a window and seeing someone undressed – and becoming obsessed with viewing others in the same, clandestine way.

We may also attract demonic powers by toying with the tools of the demonic realm, however innocently, such as hypnotism, Ouija boards, Eastern meditation or astrology. In any healing/transformation process, there should be an examination

of the person's beliefs and actions to see if any ground has been ceded to the enemy. If so, we should ask the person "renounce Satan and all of his works" before praying for deliverance.

The process of getting freed from sexual sin and bondage is a matter of uncovering (with God's help) the ground Satan has gained and removing that ground with the tools God has given us (Luke 10:19).

Finding Freedom from Demonic Oppression

Freedom often comes in multiple stages, especially for those who have suffered serious, multi-tiered, long-term demonization.

1. Identify the powers & cast them out!

When I was saved from a life of immorality, one of the first areas that God addressed was demonic strongholds. He directed me to name the demons according to the sin they were tempting me to commit and cast them out in Jesus' name. In about two weeks, the overwhelming compulsions vanished. I was still left with brokenness that needed to be healed and remained subject to occasional, intense temptations, but the demonic powers that used to control those areas were vanquished.

Many need seasoned believers to pray them through such deliverance; however, so it is important to listen carefully to the Holy Spirit for exactly what He wants you to do.

2. Enter into a lifestyle of worship.

At the Lord's direction, I began to fill the air with love songs whose words were directed to Him. Within months, I could feel a more subtle level of oppression leave. Demons cannot stand the worship of God, so if you marinate your life with intimate worship, this level of demonic powers will leave on their own.

3. Seek help from mature believers who know how to minister from the leading and power of the Holy Spirit.

At God's leading, I began to attend deliverance and inner healing classes, conferences and home fellowship groups where people laid hands on me while praying against hidden strongholds. Sometimes God would show them an empty space in my soul that He wanted to fill, or they'd identify and cast out a demonic power at the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Finding Freedom from a Broken Identity

As you pursue an intimate relationship with Him, God will reveal your true identity through His Word, the encouragement of believers and direct revelation to your soul.

Though the perception of one's identity is initially acquired through life's experiences and the opinions of others, we must choose whose opinion we're going to believe – man's or God's. If we accept God's, He will engrave it in our hearts and we'll be transformed into His image!

When we receive new hearts, God doesn't take away free will. The desires and temptations of the old nature remain an option and we must make daily choices as to which heart we want to live from. We can pursue transformation into a more complete image of God (1 Pet. 2:4-5) or we can return to the ways of the old man.

Right choices are a function of our love for God (1 John 4:19). The degree of our love for God will be based on how diligently we pursue Him and are thereby exposed to His transforming glory and grace (2 Cor. 3:18).

The development of bondage and brokenness has nothing to do with sex per se; it is only the symptom of these deeper issues. If you have seen yourself in any of these root sources for improper sexual development, pursue an intimate relationship with God. Let Him be your healer, your

righteousness and your power source over sin. It's way better that way!

(Adapted from The Sexual Healing Reference Edition) {eoa}

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