

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Leadership 2 - Pastoral Counseling
Week 6 - Common Pastoral Counseling Issues

Introduction

Sexual Damage

HETEROSEXUAL SIN

When counseling Christians who seek healing, consider the following:

- Help them identify the lies
- Help them identify how to “resist” habits/temptations
- Help them develop honesty in this area
- Emphasize building healthy relationships
- If dating, emphasize taking a stand for purity!
- If not currently dating, emphasize spiritual growth & ministry!

Christians with a background of heterosexual impurity who are considering marriage should ask themselves the following questions:

- *Maintain chastity in your dating?*
- *Last immoral episode?*
- *Gaining more self-control in turning away from acting on sexual lust?*
- *Basic view of the opposite sex healthy and biblical?*
- *What sexual problems do you anticipate in your marriage?*

HOMOSEXUALITY & BISEXUALITY

You may need to counter the wide-spread myth that homosexuality is genetically determined.

Stress the biblical position

As with other sin-habits, distinguish between spontaneously emerging lusts and temptations on the one hand, and acting on these lusts and temptations on the other hand.

Prioritize building healthy close friendships with other growing Christians of the same sex *to whom they are not sexually attracted.*

Celibacy for homosexual Christians is a valid option.

Considerations for Christians from a homosexual background who are considering marriage:

- *Victory over physical involvement?*
- *Developing Biblical view of self?*
- *Open about past?*
- *Marriage expectations?*

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Stanley R. Strong, "Christian Counseling with Homosexuals," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*: 1980 (279-287); John White, *The Fight*, pp. 105-139; Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow* (InterVarsity, 1995); Gary DeLashmutt, "An Approach to Christian Counseling for Homosexuals and Bisexuals"

PORNOGRAPHY

Those who are immersed in a pornography habit are doing serious damage to themselves:

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Consider the following steps in helping Christians get freedom from pornography:

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- NOTE:

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Harry W. Schaumburg, *False Intimacy* (NavPress, 1997)

RAPE, MOLESTATION & INCEST

Many sexual abuse victims are reluctant to bring this out into the light with other trusted Christian friends.

- Reasons for this reluctance may include:
- Consider these possible symptoms:
- BE CAREFUL!

Especially with long-term abuse victims, you may need to enlist the help of others.

- Biblically-based professional counselors
- Abuse victims who have gained substantial healing

Sexual abuse victims usually need help in the following areas:

- They usually have severe guilt feelings.
- They usually have anger and bitterness problems.
- They usually have problems with righteous discipline and setting appropriate boundaries.

Urge single abuse victims to take steps toward healing *before* they get married.

In marriage, *both* spouses should be prepared to make special sacrifices in their sexual relationship, in accordance with 1 Cor. 7:3-5.

- The victim's spouse
- The abuse victim

What about those who are guilty of past molestation and/or incest?

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Dan Allender, *The Wounded Heart* (NavPress, 1990); Jan Frank, *A Door of Hope* (Thomas Nelson, 1995); Heitreiter & Vought, *Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse* (Bethany House, 1989)

Other Issues

DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

A biblical view of divorce includes these emphases:

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When counseling people in fellowship who are contemplating divorce, consider these options:

- Urge them to expend every effort to save the marriage.

- Urge parents who are contemplating divorce to read *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*.
- When one spouse is willing to work on the marriage while the other has given up and is pursuing divorce, church discipline may be in order.

When counseling divorced people who are contemplating remarriage:

- Urge them to seriously study the biblical passages on divorce and remarriage.
- Probe to see if they can articulate their part in their failed marriage, and ask them what steps they have taken to allow God to change them in those areas.
- NOTE:

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Donald W. Shaner, *A Christian View of Divorce According to the New Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969); John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), pp. 153-186.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drug abuse, including not only illegal drugs but also abusing legal prescriptions, should be terminated. See below for guidelines on helping people do this.

We do not teach “total abstinence” from alcohol as God's will for all Christians based on biblical grounds--even those who have abused alcohol. Furthermore, there are different kinds of alcohol abuse, which call for different steps required for freedom.

Substance abusers will usually need to take the following measures to gain freedom:

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REMEMBER:

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

<http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue4/alcohol.htm>

ABORTION

Many may be reluctant to bring this into the light

Usually need help in the following areas:

Encourage participation in the H.E.A.R.T ministry

MASTURBATION

Our outlook on masturbation by singles should steer a course mid-way between two extremes:

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Masturbation is a more serious issue for married people.

Mutual masturbation by dating or engaged couples constitutes serious sexual impurity.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: John White, *The Fight*, "Sex On a Desert Island;" Dennis McCallum, "Observations on Masturbation"

Remember to keep emphasizing God's power to heal!

Assignment Due Next Week

Study for Final Exam (to be taken at the Study Center between 3/20/08 – 4/10/08)

Memory Verses

None this week

Key Points to Know for Exam

1. Be able to describe the six steps that can help Christians seeking healing from a past of heterosexual impurity.
2. Understand the four steps that can help people gain freedom from pornography.