

The Silent War

Part 3 – In The House

Intro

Over the past couple of weeks, we have walked through a very difficult conversation together. We have attempted to bring into the light something that tries desperately to remain hidden. While we all recognize that nearly every waking moment of our lives is filled [publicly] with images of sexuality, our natural bent is to act like everything [in private] is perfectly fine. None of us wants to admit our sin. None of us wants someone else to know the battle we face. We're afraid they will see us differently, won't understand our struggle, and will not accept us as we are.

But it is an issue for which we cannot remain silent on any longer. It is destroying lives, breaking apart families, and distorting our view of sexuality. However, it is never easy to talk about an issue with such widespread usage and mass acceptance. We don't want to admit it's a problem.

This Is Your Brain

If you are old enough to be a product of the 80s, you will remember a set of PSA [commercials] designed to shed light on another widespread concern – the war on drugs.

The PSA started with a man holding an egg stating *this is your brain*. He pointed to a hot skillet saying *this is drugs*. After cracking the egg and dropping it into the pan, he ends with *and this is your brain on drugs...any questions!*

How effective this campaign truly was is hard to tell. New campaigns have recently been written to revive the war on drugs. However, others have been written to combat the war on drugs – calling it a farce and damaging to some in our society. They claim that individuals should have the right to do with their bodies whatever they desire.

This has been the battle cry from mankind for thousands of years – *it's my life [body], I get to choose*.

I Corinthians 6

It's something that Paul faced in the early church in the city of Corinth as well. This was a city and a people steeped in the culture of *self-centered demand for personal rights* above all else. Many in the church found themselves caught up in this way of thinking.

6:12-13

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

They had tasted *freedom* and used it as a justification for remaining in their sin. Notice, these are not Paul's words to them. He is not stating that we are free to do and live however we want. He is repeating their words back to them – and engaging them in debate over what is worldly and what is godly.

Yes, you are technically “free”, but you were not rescued so that you could have your selfish desires. The mindset of the culture in Corinth was that the human body should be able to have whatever it desired. It was normal to give way to every possible craving.

But Paul quickly reminds them that their bodies were no longer meant to be used for selfish, immoral, impure things. Their lives were now set apart for God.

Becoming a Consumer

Pornography trains us to be consumers. You spend your days and nights consumed with how and when you can view it again. It takes over your thoughts. Causes you to see people in different ways. Sexual sin keeps you from engaging in healthy relationships and prevents you from deep, meaningful conversations. Your mind either: 1) won't allow anyone else in – for fear of them finding out; or 2) doesn't care enough because you are so focused on gratifying yourself with the next hit that you don't have time for anything else.

And the way sexual sin [particularly pornography] works is that it is designed to re-train your brain, capture your thoughts, and skew your perspective on reality. It causes you to soften or even re-write your values. Things you never would have accepted before are now edited to fit within your rationalized worldview.

Pornography is so aggressive that the more you engage, the more you become trapped. The more you consume, the more your brain wants to consume. Not just in quantity or frequency, but in depth and depravity – because it is no longer satisfied with what it previously viewed.

Some scientists and psychologists claim that draw and addiction to pornography is stronger than cocaine. You become driven by a force that you have little control of. And you cannot see what it is doing to your relationships, trajectory, course, and quality of life.

6:15-17

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

Our bodies and our lives, when we surrendered our lives to Christ, and our old self was crucified – we gave up our right to *whatever our flesh desires*. God saved us from the bondage of our sin and joined us together with Christ and set His Spirit inside of us, so that we are one with Him.

And maybe you're fighting back on this with *I'm not really joining myself with a physical person*. True, but you are joining yourself with someone who is fulfilling the definition of a prostitute. A prostitute is someone who makes personal gain [money] in exchange for sexual acts.

Not only that, Jesus knew [long before you were around] that you would pull that card in this debate:

***You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
Matthew 5:27-28***

My First Image

I can remember the very first pornographic image I saw. I was probably 10, 11, 12 years old. We were riding bikes through the neighborhood one day, and one of the boys said *hey, do you guys want to see what my dad has?* Of course, we were like – *sure*. So we rode to his house and went around to the back door, where he promptly locked us out. A few minutes later he came back racing to the door. And through the glass, he folds open one of the magazines from his dad's stash and turns its full length for all of our young eyes to behold.

We had never seen such a site before. It was amazing and scary all at the same time. We just stood there mesmerized as he held the image to the glass. Little did we know that staring at pornography through a piece of glass would become a multi-billion-dollar business and wreak havoc across the world. The thing about that moment is – I will NEVER forget it...ever. That day [and that image] will be forever seared into my brain.

6:18-20

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

We are not *free* to do with ourselves as we please. To join with another in sexual impurity is to attempt to join Christ with sin – which cannot happen. Sexual sin is so vile because it seeks to take the holy temple of God [our bodies] – which are now not our own – and contaminate it with impurities.

And it's here that I want us to have our eyes wide open as we come to the end of this series. **Your body [life] is meant to be used for the glorification of Christ, not the gratification of self.** Living in sexual sin [or any sin] keeps you from fulfilling the purpose for which you have been saved.

2 Timothy 2:20-21

Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

As we saw last week, God's ultimate goal for us is our *sanctification* – our progressive growth in Him, that we would be set apart by Him and for His purposes.

One of the main problems with sexual sin is that it sets you apart for the purposes of gratifying the flesh instead of glorifying the Father. God did not just save you *from* something, but He saved you *to* something. He has changed your purpose – no longer to live for yourself and your satisfaction, but for the purposes of His Kingdom.

Pornography [sexual impurity] ultimately keeps us from being ready and used by and for the purposes of the right master. But there is hope. There is forgiveness. There is cleansing available. And I want you to notice *where* that takes place.

2:22

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

I Timothy 6:11-12

He brought you into His family and placed you in His house. The *house* is the church. You may think this is the last place you want to be right now, or it's at least the last place you want to admit and confess your sin. Instead, you would rather fight your battle alone, in isolation.

But God's design is that our pursuit of holiness, of being cleansed, of being set apart for every good work – in being useful to the master of the *house* – happens within the church.

Change, restoration, sanctification can take place. But it doesn't happen in isolation. It's made possible within the context of community – with other believers who will be there with you. People who will walk beside you as you ask God to cleanse you, grow you, and set you apart for His purposes.

For those struggling with sexual sin [or any sin], this is the best place you could be – in the presence of those who desire to grow and be useful for the master of the house as well.