

## **The Pain and Stain of Sexual Sin: Part 1**

Satan is a master of disguise. He is a master of exaggerating the pleasure of sin, and omitting the pain of sin. The secret of a powerful lie is that it has some truth in it, and Satan, the liar from the beginning, has always used this. His temptation of Eve is a classic case.

Then, he emphasised the wonderful sense of knowledge that eating of the fruit would bring. He tantalised them with the thought that God was holding out on them, being selfish, and a whole new life was one bite away.

He was right, of course, about a whole new life. He lied about God's character, and he lied by omitting the disastrous consequences of the sin. He embellished and airbrushed the pleasure of disobeying God, and hid and omitted the pain of disobeying God. If Adam had known the utter human disaster that he was about to bring upon the human race, would he have eaten?

We do not know. All we know is the temptation for the pleasure overwhelmed any acknowledgement of consequences. And nothing has changed in Satan's strategy with tempting mankind. Sometimes he is not even responsible, as our own desperately wicked and deceitful hearts quite naturally maximise the pleasure of sin and minimise the consequences.

One of the most prominent examples of this is sexual sin. This is the first of a series on the pain and stain of sexual sin. Sex is a wonderful gift from God. Sex out of the will of God is sin, and it brings pain, and a stain. It has painful consequences, some of which scar for life. Sexual sin is using God's gift of sex in any way except the way He intended.

Is the pain and stain of sexual sin ever mentioned in today's media? Turn on the TV and you'll see music videos with enticing rhythms, its fleeting shots of flawless human beauty dancing around seemingly swimming in pleasure. Listen to the words, as the singer speaks of only the pure bliss that immoral sex with him or her will bring.

Scroll a social media feed or watch a typical movie and see how much content conveys that immoral sex is spicy, exciting and wild. It's so free, so easy, so great, who but those moral prudes would suggest otherwise? Even the so-called safe-sex campaigns say – "Yes, have sex with whoever you want, whenever you want! Sex is great. Just be careful!" – and by that they mean – try to escape the consequences.

And that is the point we want to emphasise in this first message. There are consequences. This is not a fun message. This message is like unwrapping a garbage can, and taking out each piece of rotting rubbish and showing it up for all to see. It's not something that will make you warm inside. But it is meant to expose the sin for what it is.

You need to know you are sick before you will want a cure. And we need to know how bad sexual sin is before we can begin to look at the prevention and the cure.

Satan tells you of sexual sin's pleasure, but the silence is deafening when it comes to discussing its pain. All the world will join in a chorus of joy at the fun of sexual sin, but only a lonely honest few, weeping over their loss, will personally tell you of the hurt it brings. Satan's band plays loud, drowning out the cries of millions who have eaten that fruit, and been ashamed.

But the reality is inescapable – disobeying God brings more pain than pleasure. Oh, let's be honest – there is pleasure in disobeying God. It can definitely be fun. But the pleasure is short-lived, and it leaves a dull ache of emptiness and guilt. The pain that comes from it outlasts all the pleasure by a mile. Let's look at what they don't tell you in the music videos, in the song lyrics and TV shows: the pain of sexual sin.

## **1. Sexual sin is damage done to God's plan for your life.**

Now, if I told you that God has great things in store for you, would that not be exciting news? How is it then that we violate God's plan for sex, and think that we are somehow advancing our lives? We have bought a lie. See, God designed sex. **Genesis 2:24** says, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*

Do you not think that the designer of sex knows how best it works? God planned it from the beginning – one man, one woman, together forever, and sex as the glue that seals and consummates the marriage. That's His plan. When you leave that plan, you are foolishly taking the designer's instructions, casting them aside, and using sex selfishly.

If the designer of a high-tech new car gave you the car with a manual for operating it, would you not read the manual? If you decided, I'm going to drive this thing in reverse all the time against the instructions of the designer, what do you think the results will be? Pretty soon, the car will break. Well, violating God's plan for sex brings ultimate ruin. You cannot ignore the Designer's advice and hope to get away with it. You will reap corruption.

See, many today believe they are wiser than God. So they resort to saying, "Well, that's old-fashioned. I mean, we have to be realistic. We're in the 21st century. People are going to sleep together. If they love each other, what's the problem? Those commands in the Bible were written for those people in those times. We're modern now."

Yes, times have changed, but the wages of sin remain exactly the same. People who say such things truly insult God. Do you really think that God would bother writing a book that was going to become irrelevant in the 21st century? Could an Eternal God not write something that would be timeless? Of course He could, and He did.

Times change, but Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. His Word is forever settled in heaven, and man's lust for sinful pleasure makes absolutely no difference to God's demands, His laws and His justice. Man's needs haven't changed, and if God said sex is for one man and one woman in marriage in the beginning – then it stands right now. And God's condemns sexual sin over 160 times in Scripture.

Why? Because it messes with God's plan. He does indeed love us, and would have us enjoy our lives – though they be in a sin-cursed world. God desired Israel's obedience and He said why in **Deuteronomy 5:29**: *"O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"*

That it might be well with them. God's commands bring life – real life, not the counterfeit of the Devil. Sex's potential for joy and pleasure is only truly approached when you obey God's plan. Sex outside of it does damage to God's plan for your life.

## **2. Sex before marriage and sexual sin robs you of joy when you are married.**

*Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.*

**Proverbs 5:18-19**

Sexual sin robs you of sexual joy. God designed sex so that it would be one of the highest expressions of intimacy and love between two married people. Sex allows two people to give themselves to one another unreservedly, unashamedly and unselfishly.

In many ways, sex in marriage represents the unselfishness, the vulnerability, the trust and total devotion of the entire relationship. God also meant for the passion that builds up in waiting for that one person to make the bond all that stronger when marriage does arrive.

Now when one violates God's plan and has sex outside or before marriage, many things can happen. One such commonly reported consequence is to be haunted by images and memories of previous sexual encounters, even while enjoying intimacy with your marriage partner. The excitement of discovery is dulled somewhat by the knowledge of having experienced another.

The privilege of giving your body to your marriage partner undefiled is lost. Overall, the intensity of sexual joy can be somewhat lowered by sexual sin. Now, when last did you hear that in the music videos? Satan tells you of the glories of sex – something he didn't even create, but he never tells you of how this sin will in fact rob you for a lifetime.

You may hear people saying, "Well you've got to practice before you are married!" Or "You need to sleep together before marriage to find out if you are compatible." Now these ideas cannot even be said to be clever lies. They are downright stupid. Did God send Adam on a sex course to learn about it, before He gave him Eve? No – half of sexuality is the discovery and communication – not supposedly becoming 'experienced.'

By the way, free-sex advocates are fond of saying "What's the big deal? Sex is natural." Well, if sex is so natural, why would you have to practice it? The idea of having to sleep together before marriage to find out if you're compatible is a sickening lie.

Firstly, who said a marriage is built upon perfect sex? Sex strengthens a marriage, but it isn't the foundation. Secondly, compatibility is something you will know from a spiritual, mental and emotional level, not primarily physical, unless you plan on never speaking to each other in marriage. So sex before marriage robs you of joy in marriage.

See, one of the reasons why so few marriages are working today is that young people are enjoying the privileges of marriage without the responsibilities. They are taking the privilege of sex, and using it before marriage. Then, when they get to marriage, they've already plundered it of all its joy, wonder, excitement and discovery.

Now, to them, marriage is nothing more than responsibilities. It just seems like a burden, like a lot of negatives. So they split up. But that's because they didn't follow God's instructions from the start. He meant for us to go into marriage with its privileges untouched. All the privileges of marriage then balance and make the responsibilities less heavy, and something you are more than willing to shoulder.

But our culture tells us – you ought to have money without working. You ought to have holidays without work days, you ought to be highly honoured without wisdom, you ought to have sex without a covenant before God. And you see it in abortion. We don't want the responsibility that comes with sex – a new life – so we'll just kill it.

We think we have a right to enjoy privileges without responsibilities. But God disagrees. The man who takes privileges without paying the fee of responsibility is a thief, and one day he will pay double what he stole.

### **3. Sex outside or before marriage corrupts the picture of Christ and the church.**

**Ephesians 5** tells us the mystery of how marriage truly is a picture of Christ and the church. Well, it's quite obvious there that marriage will involve a Holy Groom – the Lord Jesus, and a chaste bride – the church. The only thing that properly pictures that is two virgins who come together for the first time on their wedding night.

The happiest of marriages are those that are modelling Christ and the church. They are Christ and the church in miniature. Now, how do you build that, or model that, on the basis of fornication? Yes, there is forgiveness in God, a fresh, clean slate for the truly repentant. But for the sinner making excuses – you are building your house upon the sand.

### **4. Sexual sin creates bonds that weren't meant to be broken, and fires that were not meant to be started.**

The one aspect of sexuality that is never spoken about by the world is its unifying effect. God said that marriage is consummated by sex – they will be one flesh. The act of physical union symbolises the spiritual and emotional union that is taking place. It was never meant to be just

a fun physical sensation. God meant it to be sacred, with a powerful effect. Paul, speaking to the Corinthian church, who were known for their fornication, said:

*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? For two, saith He, shall be one flesh.*

**Corinthians 6:15-16**

Sex creates bonds deeper and stronger than we realise. It creates bonds that were not meant to be broken, because it was intended for a permanent union of husband and wife. Sleeping around creates bonds and then shatters them – and what do you think that will do to your mental health over time?

Many people will speak about how they feel like a part of them has been torn away after breaking up with someone they were having a sexual relationship with. Two virgins who come together are far more likely to stay together, as the bond is profound, unpolluted and without comparison. Bonds that weren't meant to be broken are created, and fires that weren't meant to be burning are started.

See, sexual desire is a natural part of us. Paul said it is better to marry than to burn. But what was meant to be a simmering pan turns into an explosive flame because of previous sexual sin. The taste of sexual pleasure, which is exactly what Satan wants all unmarried people to do, is enough to create a thirst for more. Once that is awakened, it is a tremendous struggle to bring it back down to a simmer.

In figurative language, the Shunnamite woman speaks of her sexual desire in **Song of Solomon 2:7**, saying, *"I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please."* Don't wake up that desire till it is time. When is it time? The wedding night.

## **5. Sexual sin robs you of self-respect and clothes you with guilt.**

Paul has remarkable words in **1 Corinthians 6:18**: *"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."* Paul says that sexual sin is a deep wound against your very own body. The one who commits sexual sin feels violated. You feel defiled, dirtied, and ashamed. There is perhaps no sin like sexual sin to clothe you in guilt and an accusing conscience.

Some react to their guilt by withdrawing from life, protecting themselves from more hurt. Probably more people react the opposite. They reason, 'Well, since I'm defiled, I might as well bury my head in defilement.' So they go full steam ahead into more sexual sin, hoping it will drown out the cry of their conscience.

God never meant for couples to ask after sex, 'Do you still respect me?' That only comes from sex outside of marriage, replacing devotion, trust and vulnerability with anxiety, performance and suspicion. God never meant for sex to make you feel used.

## **6. Sexual sin enslaves you.**

The irony of Satan's lie is this: committing sexual sin is supposedly a sign of your freedom – you're free from all those stuffy rules and morals. But in fact, the one in sexual sin is in an ever-deepening bondage. Jesus said plainly in **John 8:34**: *"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."*

Before salvation, man is a slave to his sin. But too many Christians find themselves re-entering the bondage of sin, very often, sexual sin. Sexual sin is like sailors lost at sea who have begun to drink seawater. At first, the liquid quenches the thirst. But what is actually happening is that the amount of salt in the water causes a worse thirst. And so, their thirst is now greater.

Then they drink more, and the cycle continues, until they die of dehydration and thirst in the middle of the sea. People today are in an ocean of free, immoral sex. It is everywhere. But the more they indulge, it seems the less satisfied they are – the more they need. And so they are forever slaves to their bodies, chasing down its demand for more.

In marriage, sexual desire is focused and undivided, and the satisfaction is intense. In sexual sin, it is divided, and therefore it is a never-ending search – drinking more sea-water to quench the thirst. The law of diminishing returns suggests that each time you go back to something, it gives you less, so you need more.

Like a drug addict who keeps needing to move on to a stronger dose to get that original high – so eventually people need deviant sexuality, sex in greater amounts, or with pornography and all sorts of perversions, to achieve the same thing. This is because we have rejected God's plan for sexuality – union and love in marriage – for one of our own making: sex for selfish pleasure.

## **7. Sexual sin robs you of a hunger for God.**

This is something you will never hear in the world, and sadly, you will seldom hear even in the church. Do you know that many people who are sinning sexually are trying to feed a hunger for God? That might sound bizarre. But God places a hunger in your heart for Him. Nothing else can satisfy that hunger. Nothing less than God revealing Himself to you will truly satisfy you.

But you know what we do? We hear that voice crying out within us for fellowship with God – and we watch a bit of TV. We feel that thirst for some time in the Word, and we scroll our social media feeds. We sense the hunger in us to know Christ, and we call a friend. We experience a type of longing for God, and we go out to eat.

Sometimes, when we feel desire for God, we quench it with things. Perhaps harmless things – but things which are gifts from God and can never satisfy. It is like eating chocolate when you are hungry for supper. Yes, it will fill you, but it will not satisfy you. It takes away the longing of your stomach, but it does not nourish. Worse, it makes you too full to eat real food.

That is what we do with sexual sin. We use it to fill the longing in us for intimacy with God. We use it to try and quench our deep desire for Him. We try use it to get the satisfaction we can only get in Him. And the result is: it doesn't truly satisfy, it only fills. It numbs us for a time to the hunger in our hearts for God. We feel full and don't want to pray, we don't want to read the Bible. And so we never grow spiritually, because we are always using things – the gifts of God – as a substitute for God Himself.

See, the spiritual sin of sexual sin is idolatry. What we are saying when we sin sexually is, "God, you are not enough for me. I will have to use one of your gifts to fulfil me." And by doing that, we are saying that God's gift of sex is greater than God Himself. We bow before this idol of sexual pleasure to fulfil us.

When we use sexual sin, we are probably using the worst thing possible, because sex has such possibilities to satisfy, to quench desire, to be the fulfilment of intimacy of love. Sex in marriage does all those things, but sexual sin is like a pale version of that, a weak, pathetic attempt to get some of that intimacy, joy and desire.

It's like CS Lewis put it: when you mess around with sexual sin, it's not that your desires are too strong, it's that they are too weak. You are willing to settle for less, for the broken version of God's gift to satisfy your heart's longing, when God Himself freely offers Himself to you. You are choosing to use chewing gum to chase away your hunger pains, instead of making an effort to chew the feast that God has for you in His Word.

## **8. Sexual sin has physical and financial consequences.**

I've left this for last because it is not like we are ignorant of the physical consequences of sin. Sexually transmitted diseases are highly prevalent. It seems even the threat of lifelong illness death does not deter humans from sinning.

Likewise, how sad in our time to have the words 'unwanted pregnancy.' It is typical of Satan's lies – the idea that you can plunder the privileges of marriage, but disregard and shun the responsibilities. So the world operates by saying, 'Let's take the privilege of sex, but not the responsibility – marriage, family and raising children.' Now it is simple: should you conceive a human being by your sexual sin, and you don't want him or her to live, then just kill them, and coat it with the words 'termination of pregnancy.'

Would this sad state of affairs be the case if we obeyed God's Word on sex? No, but sexual sin has pain and a stain. Solomon warned us in **Proverbs 6:27-28**: *"Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?"* Sexual sin has consequences. There is pain.

You don't hear much of what we've said today, do you? You hear only of the pleasure, and the supposed safety net of a condom that you're supposed to use. Don't be deceived, God is not mocked. A condom is not going to stop God's judgement from falling on sexual sin. **Hebrews 13:4** says, *"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."*

God told Adam, in the day you eat you will surely die, and death passed upon our whole race because Satan managed to attract their attention to the pleasure of disobeying God, and not the pain.

So we have begun to unmask the lie behind sexual sin. But there are more questions to ask. How do I avoid sexual sin? How do I stay pure in an impure world? And what if I've messed up already? What can I do? Is there any hope? Well, there is, and we'll answer those questions and more from the Bible in the rest of this series.