

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. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. (Matt. 5:27-30)

Impact of Pornography (and Masturbation) on the Wife/Marriage Relationship

- Background
 - Consuming porn is most prevalent with men than women but recent stats reveal a growing trend in women pursuing porn (20-30%)
 - In some sense, engaging in porn impacts much in the same way as physical adultery
- Spiritual Dynamics within the Wife
 - Relationship with God—range of questions and emotions
 - Why me?! Why him?!!
 - Pull away from God out of anger, confusion, and bitterness
 - Relationship with Self
 - Questions beauty, body image, ability to satisfy husband, and other insecurities
 - Questions adequacy as a wife, what she can/should have done differently
 - Relationship with Husband
 - Sense of betrayal, distrust due to adultery of the heart
 - Tend to wonder if husband is still engaged in porn—wants to ask but doesn't want to ask because afraid of the answer—the wife should not be main source of accountability.
 - Wants him to get help
 - May sin against husband in the course of dealing with her husband's struggles
 - Bitterness and anger, withdrawal and coldness
 - Punish by withholding sexual intimacy
- How does the Gospel Apply?
 - For the Husband
 - The husband is confronted with his idolatry and unbelief regarding his relationship with God—thus an increasing understanding of his sinfulness.
 - Idolatry
(Col. 3:4-5)—*When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.*
 - The husband needs to come to grips with his idolatry of ...
 - Self-pleasure—"I will do what it takes to get and experience pleasure, even if means sinning to get it!"
 - Self-glory—"I am concerned about my glory, not God's glory!"
 - Self-rule—"No one tells me what to do in my kingdom" (the kingdom of self).
 - Unbelief
 - "Lord, you are my shepherd, but I want more than you (cf. Ps. 23:1)... I don't believe you are really God; I don't believe you are the best or want the best for me; I don't believe you or your ways are most satisfying or best for my soul; I don't really believe my sin is really that bad ..."

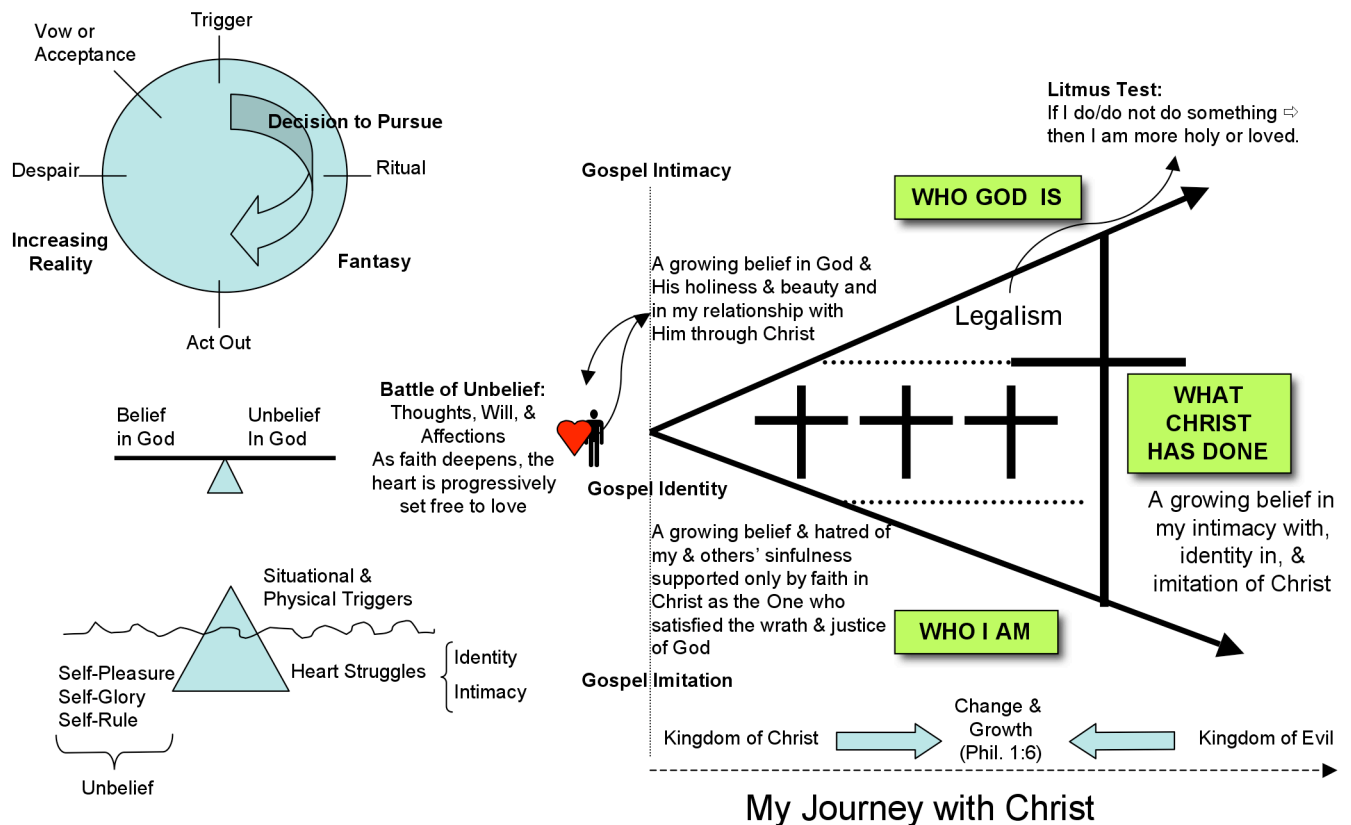
- He needs to see his revealed sexual sin as a grace moment where Christ is calling him to a more intimate relationship:
 - (Matt. 11:28-30)—²⁸"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
 - (Matt. 16:24-26)—²⁴Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - (Ps. 16:11)—You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.
 - (Matt. 5:6)—Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
 - The husband will not only grow in his hatred for his sinfulness but will also grow in his affections for God through Christ. The glory and beauty of God's love is seen most vividly from the depths of despair and the upward glance of repentance.
- The husband will battle the fight of faith in the following areas:
 - **Intimacy**—
 - **Answers the questions:** "Who should I know? Whom should I be with?" "To whom should I go or draw near?" "Who is my comfort, refuge, strength, peace?"
 - **Reveals:** Who/what one values, desires, longs for, lives for.
 - Is Christ the object of his heart's affections or does he set his mind and heart on the means of his fantasies—sex, power, food, fitness, possessions, etc.
 - **Identity**—
 - **Answers the question:** "Who am I?"
 - **Reveals:** How one sees oneself, which influences his decisions and resultant behavior.
 - Identity is rooted primarily in relationship but also shaped by roles, problems, experiences, etc.
 - Identity involves . . .
 - Some estimate of one's potential and capability based on history, present realities, and fantasies
 - Some comparison of potential and capability with others
 - Wrong identity leads to wrong intimacy.
 - Wrong intimacy is at the root of wrong imitation.
 - For the Wife
 - May be confronted for the first time with her sinfulness through her husband's sinfulness—this will shake her understanding of her relationship with God and will hinder her perspective and ability to deal with her husband in a redemptive manner.
 - The wife is the primary person God can use to bring about change in her husband and redemption in their marriage. She will have to move from a position of self-protection by taking steps of faith to love her husband like Christ. It is difficult to minister to one's husband when defensive, when manipulating with guilt and bitterness, or when frozen by a false sense of shame and insecurities.

Additional Guidance in Helping Others Struggling with Sexual Sin

A. Background Information that needs to be understood

- History
 - Try to determine the worldview, beliefs, desires, and distortion in understanding about God, others (esp. the opposite sex).
 - Chronology - very detailed. Origins—How did your struggles start?
- Content/Material
 - What kind? Any image or explicit nudity etc?
 - Heterosexual or Homosexual? Adult or children?
- Frequency
 - Viewing and/or acting out (masturbation)
 - Do you think if you are not viewing then you are not sinning?
 - Try to understand the object of the fantasy
 - False Relationship(s)
- Help
 - Have you sought previous help? If yes, from whom?
 - When did you begin to share your struggles with others?
 - What kind of help did you receive and what did you learn?
- Spiritual Journey
 - When and how did you come to faith in Christ and believe in the gospel?
 - Do you question your salvation?
 - How does this particular struggle affect your walk with Christ?
- Family of Origin (FOO)
 - Describe your family and your relationships with them—parents, siblings, and grandparents?
 - Were you exposed to any porn or sexual abuse growing up?
 - Are there any generational patterns of this particular sin or other outward struggles in your family?
- Identity
 - How do you see yourself—animal, sexual addict, worthless, manhood issues?
 - How do you think God sees you and how do you see God?
 - How do you see others—men and women—and how do they see you?
- Marriage
 - Does your wife know? When did she find out?
 - What damage control needs to be addressed?
 - What has been the impact on your marriage relationship, to include the marriage bed?
 - What were the rhythms of the marriage bed throughout marriage

The Gospel & Sinful Struggles



sojourn
COUNSELING

R. K. Cheong (Oct 2008)

B. Dynamics of the Heart—the “Addiction Cycle” (see diagram above)

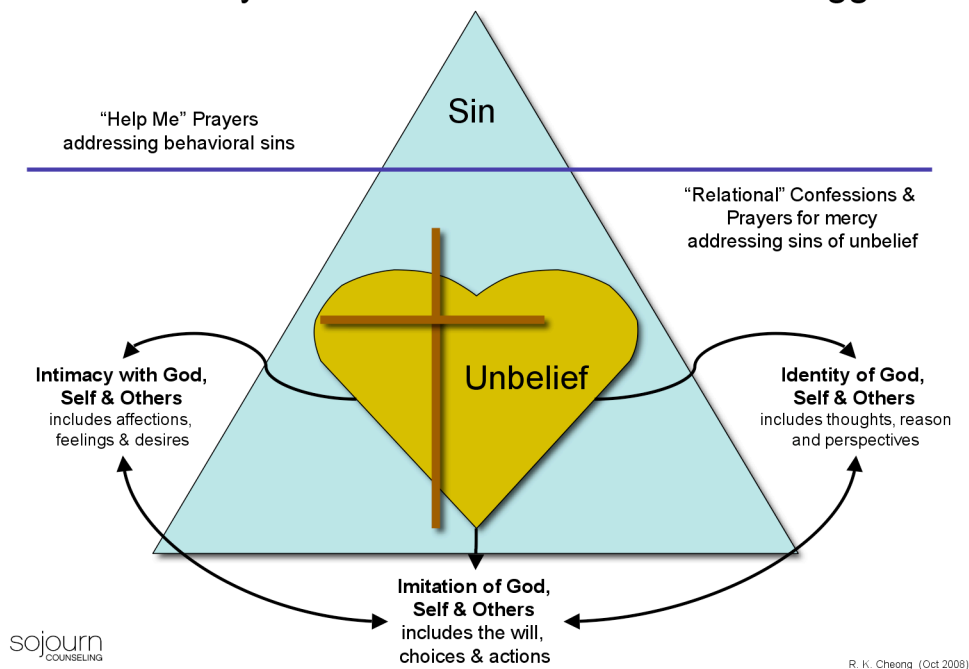
- Trigger
 - Situational difficulty can serve as a trigger—being chewed out by a boss, disrespected by someone, all alone or feeling lonely
 - Physical or emotional condition can serve as a trigger—tired, stressed, can’t sleep
 - Blessings can also serve as a trigger—sense of entitlement or reward
 - A life reality causes them to flee to fantasy
- Decision—brings more satisfaction than acting out—savoring, anticipation, excitement
- Ritual
 - Developed as a result of an established pattern— turn on the computer, walk by a store etc. (like a dog who has created well-worn ruts in the backyard)
 - Sexualize an object, event or situation—know the end result of the ritual
- Acting Out
 - What does this mean for them?
 - What goes through your mind before, during, and after acting out?
 - Before, during, and after acting out, how do you see yourself (identity)?
 - Why do you draw close to these fantasies (intimacy)?
- Despair

- Vow
 - Acceptance vs. Repentance
 - Acceptance = "I will never change." "What is the use, I am going to fall again anyway."
- It is crucial to know the evil schemes of the enemy, the flesh, and the world.
 - (2 Cor. 11:3)— *But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.*
 - (Matt. 10:16)— *Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.*

C. A Very Real Battle

- Brokenness & Resolve
 - How broken are they over this sin?
 - "Are you in the battle?" "Do you want to change?"
 - Are you resolved to fight or did your wife find out and you "have to get help"?
- Repeated adultery against God & spouse

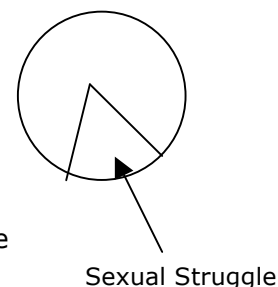
Battle Prayers--Gets to the Heart of the Struggle



- Relational Confession
 - Learn to confess relationally: "Lord, I confess you are my Shepherd and you are all I need (cf. Ps. 23:1), but forgive me for not being satisfied with you and all you have given me in the gospel. Lord, I confess I don't really love you when I choose to worship the creation rather than you, my Creator and Redeemer... Forgive me for clinging more to sexual fantasy than the reality of Christ. Have mercy on me and change my affections, desires, and unbelief so that I will believe more and more in the surpassing value of knowing Christ ..."
 - Lord, I confess that I have grown disconnected with my wife because of the adultery in my heart with other women ...

D. The Heart

- Segmentation
 - What percentage of this sexual struggle occupies your life?
 - Usually response is 10-25%
 - Are you segmenting your life?
 - Lack of self control and discipline usually shows up somewhere else in life
 - Can't split up the heart and will—same for all other parts of your life.
- Other Aspects of Life
 - Discuss other aspects of your life to explore other areas of the heart (shift focus from the sexual sins to rest of life).
 - Loving wife—Loving and serving others—Worshipping God
- Self-Control Enabled by the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22-23)
 - Many will say that they cannot control themselves or stop it once it starts
 - Aspect of unbelief—"I don't have the power to stop ... feels like I am being dragged by the throat ..."
 - Ask what happens if someone walks in the room during the act, can you stop then?



E. Hope for Change and Forgiveness

- God
 - We must believe the God who created our sexuality and sexual pleasures can overwhelm these created pleasures with holy pleasures—(Ps. 16:11; Matt. 5:6)
- The Incomparable Grace of the Gospel
 - God knew everyday of your life before you were even born (Ps. 139:16) and He still chose to save you before the foundations of the world (Eph. 1:4)
- Gospel Promises
 - (Phil. 1:6)— *He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus*
 - (2 Cor. 2:14)— *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ*
 - (2 Pet. 1:2-4)— *²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; ³seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*
- What Does Change Look Like?
 - Know that change occurs incrementally in most cases. Repeated struggles will happen.
 - Dynamics of the Struggle
 - Is there a decreasing frequency between struggles
 - Duration & Intensity of struggle
 - Is his response different after struggle—increased hatred and hope
 - Relationship with God
 -
 - Relationship with Others
 -
- Gospel-centered encouragements:
 - (2 Tim 2:22)—*Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*
 - (1 Cor 16:13-14)—*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.*
- Testimonies of others