

The Spiritual Reality of Sexual Addiction

Nate:

Introduction to PLM;

- Begin with a bio of Steve
- Where the program started
- What it is now
- Spiritual atmosphere
- Power experiences people have with the Lord (because people are really praying)
- We have lived with these men for 30 years

We have learned a great deal about the realities of a man who is bound in sexual addiction:

- 1) They believe that they are walking with the Lord—but that they have just one small problem

But the reality is...they are full of themselves.

The Lord is very unimportant to them.

- 2) They want to overcome sexual addiction with as little sacrifice to their lifestyle as possible.

They want to continue to live for themselves, but without the sexual addiction

They want to continue to be worldly, but without the sexual addiction

The reality is...we know that what these men need, we cannot give them.

The other thing the Bible makes clear is that by nature every human exists in a state of spiritual death.

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2: **1**As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2**in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3**All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^a and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

In the word of God, two of the themes which dominate are Life and death.

But when the Bible speaks of life, and when it speaks of death, it is not only speaking of physical life and physical death.

It also speaks very often of spiritual life, and spiritual death.

And one of the great truths found in the Bible is that spiritual life and spiritual death are much more important than physical life and physical death.

One thing the Bible makes clear is that there is only one source of spiritual life. God HIMSELF is Life.

Listen to what Moses says to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 30.

Deu 30:19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live,

Deu 30:20 loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life

Now the book of Hebrews tells us something about Jesus that is astounding.

Jesus is the expressed image of the invisible God. He is God in the flesh.

So then, it logically follows that Jesus IS LIFE. Jesus Himself, the God-man, He IS Life.

That truth is at the very center of the Christian faith.

Jesus' consistent message throughout the Gospels was "I AM LIFE, and without me, no one has eternal life."

Here's the problem. The large majority of the evangelical Church culture doesn't believe that. Here's why I say that.

Because if you ask people how they know that they have eternal life, they will give you an answer other than "Jesus is my life."

They might say,

- I was baptized as a child
- I have been confirmed
- I believe the doctrines of the church
- I believe that Jesus was born, died and was resurrected
- I believe I need a Savior
- I belong to such and such a congregation
- I have never been such a bad person

But none of those things is salvation, and none of those things demonstrate that a person has been genuinely converted.

Let me give you a personal testimony to illustrate what I am talking about.

At 15 years of age, I realized that I needed to be saved, or else I was going to go to hell. So, I went to a youth event and had some kind of experience with the Lord. About a year later, I was exposed to sexual sin for the first time.

For the next ten years, I lived a life that was in direct opposition to God's will and His Word. I used women for sexual pleasure. I was self-centered and hypocritical. I professed to love God with my mouth, but denied Him with my life.

Now, when I think about that period of my life, the question that I have asked myself many times, is "Why wasn't I bothered by the way that I was living? Why wasn't there something inside of me that was disgusted by the fact that I was addicted to pornography? Why didn't I weep over the fact that I was dishonoring the name of Christ because of my lifestyle? Why didn't I plead with God for forgiveness and freedom so that I could live a life that glorified Jesus? Why didn't I care that with every act of sin, I was damaging my soul, damaging my relationship with Christ?"

Now, it is true that at times I wanted to stop looking at pornography. Sometimes my addiction caused problems in my relationships. Sometimes I felt bad about myself because I was an addict. Sometimes it caused problems with my work performance. And sometimes the consequences of sin caused some emotional and mental pain.

But none of those reasons has anything to do with "Jesus IS MY LIFE, and so I must deal with the sin which is separating me from JESUS, who IS MY LIFE."

So then, my conclusion is that I was not converted before I came to Pure Life. Yes, I was in the church. Yes, I had been baptized. Yes, I professed to be a Christian. Yes, I went to prayer meetings and Bible studies.

But, Jesus Himself was not MY LIFE before I came to Pure Life Ministries.

Now, let's take the last 8 years of my life.

When I went through the Residential Program at Pure Life Ministries in 2008, the Holy Spirit began to bring conviction upon me. He began to show me what was really true about my life. And what I saw, was spiritual death everywhere.

Pornography addiction. A total lack of self-control. A strong desire to fulfill my lusts, no matter what it cost anyone else. Self-centeredness. Pride. Lack of hunger for God's Word and prayer. Lack of concern for the needs of people around me. Lack of thankfulness for the Cross.

These are not merely behavioral problems. They are evidences of spiritual death.

Far from having a problem in one area of my life, my whole life was spiritual death.

That revelation was extremely traumatic for me. Because I saw, "I am cut off from the Author of Life. I am dead in trespasses and sins. And unless He comes to me and touches me with His divine life, I am a walking dead man."

And He did touch me with His life! And since that time, December 30th, 2008, there is a LIFE inside of me that I never had before. I am not talking about being a perfect person. But I am talking about the seed of Divine Life going into me and bearing out the Life of Jesus.

I did not come to Pure Life Ministries because I needed to be improved. I came because I needed NEW LIFE!

For many people, the reason that they are sexual addicts is because they have never been converted.

- They grew up in church.
- They adopted a religious lifestyle based on the religious culture.
- They were baptized, and are presenting a religious image

But who they really are is spiritually dead. This is why they are addicted to pornography. Because they are separated from the life that would make them pure, holy, consecrated to Jesus.

And unless they are converted, they will remain lost. Whether or not they figure out a way to stop looking at pornography is of no eternal consequence. What many need is to be born again.

A sexual addict is self-centered. He is devoted to satisfying his sexual cravings. He is ungrateful and always desires more. He does not care about the needs of other people. He lies. He cheats. He is very proud. He does not mind hurting other people to get what he wants. He hides his true self from everyone around him, so that they cannot see who he really is.

I should know. I was like that!

If a man stops looking at pornography, or visiting prostitutes, but who he is in his heart does not change, then Jesus is not satisfied. Because that man has not truly entered into LIFE.

In America, and in Holland, there is a great danger of people being cultural Christians, and yet never possessing Jesus as their LIFE.

That's why people come to Pure Life Ministries. Because Jesus wants to become these men's life.

And this is what we preach and teach for the entire time they are with us: Jesus Christ IS LIFE.

Jesus Christ can never approve of someone who simply modifies a few behaviors.

But when a sexual addict goes through the process that Jesus Christ is satisfied with, he is touched by the Author of Life, and he experiences a

radical transformation of his heart and life. That man is a new creation in Christ, and is now full of the life of Jesus.

Conclusion

I don't want my lifestyle to change; I want to fix this little problem with as little sacrifice to my lifestyle as possible.