

Family Legacy Institute

Tools For Families Building Godly Legacies

The Spiritual Side of Sexual Struggle

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Little Chucky is five years old. He loves baseball more than anything in the world. His heroes are names like Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams, Babe Ruth, and Albert Pujols. When he's not sleeping or eating, Chucky is out hitting baseballs in the park across the street from his house. For a five-year-old, he's already pretty good.

His dream is to play pro ball when he grows up. Meanwhile, his second-best dream is to hit a baseball in the center lane of I-70 as it goes through downtown St. Louis. He sees that long flat concrete slab as the primo place to see how far he can actually whack a ball.

One day Chucky mentioned this to his dad. His dad's first response was, "Hey little buddy, I'll go over to the park any day and let you hit balls. It's a much safer place." His dad understands things about freeways, like 18-wheelers, steel, inertia, speed, etc. However, Chucky insisted that the freeway was numero-uno on his list, and said that someday soon he'd just go there by himself if his dad wouldn't come with him. His dad's second response seemed amazingly negative. Dad said, "Chuck, you may *not* play baseball on the freeway ~ not today ~ not tomorrow ~ not ever. If I ever catch you doing it, or hear that you even tried to do it, I'll warm your tail in a manner that it won't cool down for a month ~ and I'll take away your baseball, bat, and glove for three years. Kapeesh?"

Chucky responded, "You're so mean! All my *life* I've dreamed about hitting a long one on I-70. There's no place in the *whole world* better than I-70. You're ruining my life! You don't understand me at all! You're a lousy dad! I hate you! I wish I was someone else's kid!"

So what would you say ~ is Chucky's father a Class A jerk, or a loving dad? Obviously, the latter. Now let's change the story-line. A working knowledge of the spiritual issues inherent in sexuality can provide two essential components in today's highly sexualized culture. First, it provides a navigational tool to help men and women avoid the sexual land mines. Second, this knowledge provides a healing tool for those whose lives have been turned into chaos after stepping on any of these mines.

Both of those are tied to understanding and obeying God's will, and there's the rub for some who feel that God is like Chucky's dad, taking away all the fun. To understand the spiritual issues of human sexuality, we'll briefly review God's instructions. Then we'll look at the strategic methods of God's Enemy (the Devil). The assumption is that Satan is real, alive and well, and highly invested in this discussion. We'll then look at a few examples provided by some of the wise old guys of scripture. Finally, we'll look at God's remedies to rescue and heal us after we run off a cliff.

God's instructions

First, let's get the right picture in our heads. Many look at God as a celestial killjoy, wishing to squash any sexual fun into which they might be so lucky as to fall. Others see God as a mean guy just waiting for us to fail so He can body-slam us to the deck. A better understanding of God, more in keeping with scripture, is as a loving Father ~ a dad who is patient, kind, and hopes to keep us from being badly hurt by the "sexual freeways" of our era, and the lure to come out and play on them.

Obviously, Chucky's dad is a loving guy who's willing to lay down firm boundaries and then enforce them, to save Chucky's life. That's how it is with God's instructions in the Bible. They're basically boundaries, aimed at protecting His children ~ although He's different than Chucky's dad in that God gives us the ability to think for ourselves and decide whether to play on the sexual freeway, or obey Him. Let's look at four of God's boundaries as they pertain to sex.

God shows us the best paths: In regard to human sexuality, God's basic instruction can be captured in seven words: *One man, one woman, for a lifetime*. The first place that human sex is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis chapter two: ***"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh (i.e., intercourse). The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."***¹

Three thoughts are woven into this text. The first is that of leaving parents and becoming united with a person we love. The second is that the leaving and cleaving had no terminus date – divorce was not intended to be a solution to anything, in God's original plan. This doesn't mean that God dislikes divorced people, but no parent is in favor of something that hurts his children as badly as divorce. The third and obvious thought involves sex! One man, one woman, monogamous in their sexuality, joined for a lifetime.

Disobedience always hurts God's children: The second biblical thought is that the only container strong enough to contain the power of human sexuality, is marriage. Sex is an amazing thing. It's exciting ~ it's bonding ~ it's refreshing. Perhaps most of all, it's powerful. This is why one of the Ten Commandments says, ***"You shall not commit adultery."***² In giving that command, our loving Father was attempting to steer us away from pain, just as Chucky's dad was doing when he prohibited playing baseball on a freeway.

When discussing the power of human sexuality, all other containers than marriage lead to problems ~ often to ruin. They're like Chucky on I-70 as the 18-wheelers whiz past. In addition to the safety and protection of monogamous marriage there are essentially three other broad categories, or types of containers into which human sexuality is sometimes poured:

- Non-marital heterosexual sex ~ adultery, or sex with another opposite-sex adult partner; pedophilia, or sex with a child
- Homosexuality ~ sex with another same-sex partner, adult or child
- Self-sex ~ masturbation, often accompanied by pornography

Each of these three containers brings their own unique set of problems. Each has the following characteristics in common:

- They tend to be narcissistic (self-focused)
- They lead toward greater problems (depression, disease, divorce, deviance)
- They create shame and secrecy

There's a proverb that says, "***He who sins against me, injures himself.***"³ No parent wishes for their children to get hurt. All parents strive to protect their children from harm. So it is with God our Father. Better than anybody, He knows about how His wonderful gift of sex can cause massive ruin in a person's life, family, and even career. He wishes to protect us, to the best of His ability (without chaining us to a tree). Naturally, if we still choose to "play baseball on the freeway," sadly, it's on us.

Obedience always brings God's blessing: God's blessing is powerful stuff. There's a terrific promise from God stating that ...***He blesses those who are obedient to him by showing His love to "a thousand generations" of those who love and obey Him.***⁴ Much of God's blessing is found in the legacy we leave to our children and grandchildren ~ stable marriages ~ families with solid values ~ positive modeling to follow in the lives of our parents and