

The Real Root of Sexual Sin



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The most powerful weapon against sexual impurity is humility. Patterns of sinful thought and behavior are fruits of a deeper root. If we want to stop bearing bad fruit, we must aim our primary attack against the root. And the root of sexual sin is not our sex drive; it's pride.

We live in an age dominated by Darwinian explanations of biology and psychology. So we easily absorb certain naturalistic assumptions. One such assumption is that our sexual drives and impulses are remnants of our primordial, bestial ancestors, and therefore we deal with them with cages of external personal and social restraints.

This is a very conflicted perspective. It views us as both victims and monsters. On one hand, we're victims of our ancient past, and on the other hand, we're sexual monsters if we express our primal impulses in ways not sanctioned by the prevailing level of social tolerance.

It's also a wholly inadequate explanation in view of our consuming sexual problem. The degrees of human sexual depravity, distortion, and destruction are of such a nature that nearly everyone thinks things and many do things that we have no other word for than evil.

Sex Is Not the Problem

It's shocking how little our inner evil bestial impulses have to do with our primal genetic intent: procreation. No other human instinct has so many deviations in its expressions. Our culture can't keep up with the expanding sexual definitions. LGBTQ is now just shorthand for LGBTTQQAAPPK (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, pansexual, polygamous, kinkiness). And this is likely obsolete already. It's getting tragically ridiculous.

But since Darwinism denies any basis for assigning moral value to anything, we can't term something a "perversion," because this word has moral connotations. So we're trying to solve the problem of human sexual perversion by eliminating the concept of sexual perversion. But this can't scale to embrace all sexual expressions without destroying people and society.

And it won't work, because the root problem isn't actually a sexual one.

Root of All Sin

What does the Bible diagnose as the root of human sexual perversion — what we often and rightly call sexual brokenness? We can see it clearly in Romans 1:21–26,

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions.

"Dishonorable passions," which refers to sexual sin in all its deviant heterosexual, homosexual, and other expressions, is a manifestation of humanity unhinged from its Creator. The real root of perversion, of which the dishonorable passions of sexual perversions is just one fruit, is human pride.

Pride is a black hole of consuming selfishness at the core of fallen human nature. Pride's nature is to consume, to bring into the self. It sees other people, all of creation, and God himself as things to use in service to the self's desires.

We all know this by experience. We know the more we feed any expression of pride, whether through sex or anger or covetousness or whatever, pride's appetite grows and urges us to consume more and more.

So just as gluttony or anorexia is pride infecting and manipulating the self's orientation toward food, or greed is pride infecting and manipulating the self's orientation toward money, sexual immorality and perversions are pride infecting and manipulating the self's orientation toward sex. Sexual sin is unhinged human pride rejecting the Creator in order to sexually consume others for the benefit of the self.

Personal Pride, Corporate Judgment

This does not mean, however, that there's an exact correlation between the nature of our particular sexual brokenness and our personal rebellion against God. We are all born with natures in rebellion against God. But our individual sexuality is shaped by a host of biological, personal, family, and social/cultural influences. Some factors we're born with, some may have been abusively forced upon us, and some we sinfully embrace and nourish. The Bible acknowledges all these factors.

But when Paul says God gives up a people "in the lusts of their hearts to impurity," he's mainly (though not exclusively) referring to a corporate judgment. The more a people unhinge themselves from God's ordained limits, the more God removes the restraints on the sexual expressions of pride, resulting in a societal slide into consuming sexual destruction.

So we must keep in mind that, no matter what sexual orientation or dysfunction or distortion we're dealing with, our biggest personal and corporate problem is not sexual; it's pride.

You Are Not Your Own

Our most powerful weapon in the fight against sexual impurity is not a cage to hem in our depraved impulses, nor is it increased tolerance of sexual deviancy, but a profound humility. And humility is a deep realization and embrace of the truth that we are not our own. This is why Paul gave the Corinthians this counsel regarding sexual sin:

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. (1 Corinthians 6:18–20)

Yes, fleeing from an enticing sexual temptation — taking behavioral action — is necessary. But notice that Paul's primary emphasis is not behavior modification, nor is it deliverance from demonic oppression, both of which are realities of our complex human experience and so have some place in our fight for sexual purity. Paul sees the primary issue in our sexual struggle as the remaining pride within us.

That's why the key to our freedom, the great killer of our sexual sin, is in our embracing this reality:

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

This is what it means that we are not our own. This is what sin-killing humility looks like. This is the death of pride and all its perverting power over us.

Freedom is not the freedom to express our pride-fueled sexual desires. Freedom is the humble belief that we are not our own, and therefore not enslaved to our all-consuming pride, but free to be what God created us to be.