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**The Use of the Concept of New Identity in Christ in  
Counseling Sexual Addiction in Young Men**

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## Introduction

In his PhD dissertation, Adrian S. van Klinken cites Banda as describing certain behaviours associated with masculinity in Africa in terms of “distortion(s) of manhood.”<sup>2</sup> Banda is said to have mentioned “sexuality, alcohol, domestic violence, domination over women, and a more general irresponsibility on the part of men” as some of the things constituting these distortions. In this present discussion, we want to focus our attention on one such distortion that Banda has mentioned – sexuality – and look at it from the perspective of its addictive consequences for young persons, especially male young persons.

Mark Griffiths has argued that sexual addiction is more of a problem to men than women. He writes

an evaluation of the pre-1980’s sexuality literature would have us believe there are far more female “sex addicts” than male ones. In reality, female sex addiction is quite rare, and it is males who are far more likely to be addicted to sex.<sup>3</sup>

From Griffiths’ observation then, we can say that males rather than females are at more risk as far as sexual addiction, with its challenging issues, is concerned. Indeed, sex, and especially as far as it has to do with the attraction of, and attachment to the female body, seems to be holding sway on the male population in general and the young male population in particular.<sup>4</sup> This position could be supported by the numerous advertisements which go with the use of the female body, especially the young female body in our world today. Today, we find several attractive young female bodies painted or photographed in nude on almost everything that is offered for sale whether by print or electronic. One wonders whether the female body attracts the attention of fellow females as it does to the male counterpart.<sup>5</sup> We are, of course, not unaware of the fact that gay and lesbian sexual practices present a counter case against this position by

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<sup>2</sup> Adrian Sander van Klinken, “The Need for Circumcised Men” : The Quest for Transformed Masculinities in African Christianity in the Context of the HIV Epidemic (PhD thesis Utrecht University 2011 ), 141.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Griffiths, “Sex Addiction on the Internet” found on [www.janushead.org/7-1/Griffiths.pdf](http://www.janushead.org/7-1/Griffiths.pdf). Accessed on 18/6/12.

<sup>4</sup> [www.medicinenet.com/child\\_abuse/page2.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/child_abuse/page2.htm). Accessed on 21/06/12.

<sup>5</sup> [www.springerlink.com/content/nm21156101702058/](http://www.springerlink.com/content/nm21156101702058/). Accessed on 21/06/12.

pointing out that a person's body can appeal also to same-sex persons. However, Jesus' caution in Matt.5:28 that whoever looks at a woman lustfully commits adultery with her seems to suggest, to a very large extent, that it was the male audience that Jesus was addressing in that passage. Given that position then, the point could be made that the female body possibly appeals more to the male counterpart than the female. What this implies is that, in our world today the average male mind, especially the young one, is being blown apart by the sexual images and/or messages beaming all over the place thereby fuelling lustful desires in these young persons. Sometimes, young persons are made to believe that what they see and/or hear in the print and electronic media are what actually transpire in real life situations. They therefore, spend a greater part of their young lives in the world of fantasy. The end result is that some young persons get to a point where they are pushed to put into practice what they see around them and which they have fantasised about all the while. Several of such young persons then embark on an endless journey of sexual ecstasy either in solo-sexual encounters in their secret places or in heterosexual and/or homosexual encounters with others. At the end of the day, the more they wander through this crazy world of sex, the more they find themselves enslaved to an endless life of insatiable sexual passion which tends to consume anything sexual in its way. At this stage, an innocent young man has become addicted to sex and struggles with it through life unless he finds healing from it.

It is in the light of this that, in this discussion, we want to concentrate on how young male persons can handle the gift of sexuality in a more humane and responsible way rather than becoming addicted to it. Let us caution here and now, that since we are dealing with sexual addiction in young men and how they can obtain freedom, we would not be using the inclusive language. When all personal references are found in the masculine gender then, it is intentional and points to the target audience, even though young female persons in similar situation can find the discussion very helpful as well.

#### **A. What Is Sexual Addiction?**

Addiction, generally, has been defined by Carlo C. DiClemente as the “ learned habits that once established become difficult to extinguish even in the face of dramatic, and, at times, numerous

negative consequences.”<sup>6</sup> DiClemente explains that addicted individuals exhibit compulsive behaviours which are usually out of control and which they are unable to change even if they wish to. What DiClemente’s definition brings out for us is the fact that addiction is something learned, *habits*, rather than inborn. Earle and Earle, writing on sexual addiction, buttress the position of addiction as a learned habit by maintaining that “Sex addicts are made, not born.”<sup>7</sup>

Gennaro Ottomanelli sees addiction in positive and negative terms. Ottomanelli maintains that even though addiction usually connotes negative behaviour, one could be positively addicted to good deeds like gardening.<sup>8</sup> Carlo DiClemente also talks about this so-called positive addiction as well. DiClemente thinks that if one is addicted to some things like exercises or meditation, such addictions could be seen to be positive. This, however, calls for further debate as to whether *addiction* per se could ever be seen to be positive in its strict sense of the word. It should be noted that *addiction* normally involves some level of compulsiveness with strong resistance to change. The so-called positive addictions would be difficult to sustain if such addicts, at the end of the day, would find these positive and useful activities like gardening, exercising, or meditation rather uncontrollable and extremely difficult to modify. If these activities could be modified as and when necessary, then maybe they are just habits and not addictions. In any case, this discussion is looking at addiction in its negative sense and how it can adversely affect young persons. We are, therefore, not dealing with addiction in general here to talk about its possible positive side. Our focus is particularly on sexual addiction and its implications for young male persons and we turn now to that.

Sexual addiction is a condition whereby an individual has an unusual desire for sex to the extent that the individual develops an obsession for it. Griffiths cites P.J. Carnes’ definition of sexual addiction as “any sexually-related, compulsive behaviour which

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<sup>6</sup> Carlo C. DiClemente, *Addiction and Change: How Addictions Develop and Addicted People Recover* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ralph H. Earle and Marcus R. Earle, *Sex Addiction: Case Studies and Management* (New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1995), 13.

<sup>8</sup> Gennaro Ottomanelli, *Children and Addiction*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 7.

interferes with normal living and eventually becomes unmanageable.”<sup>9</sup> Michael Herkov opines that “Sexual addiction is best described as a progressive intimacy disorder characterized by compulsive sexual thoughts and acts.”<sup>10</sup> From this position then, we can say that the sexually addicted person has his thought life saturated with sex and sexual fantasies sometimes to a point where he loses concentration for any other activity. The situation can often degenerate to a point where it begins to endanger other personal relationships the addicted person is involved in. More often than not, addicted persons do not see themselves as the source of the problem and tend to shift the blame on others or on other factors. This may drive the addicted person to look for solution to his plight from the wrong places. Sexual addiction can be associated with all kinds of risks leading to illegal sexual activities like rape, child sexual abuse and enslavement to pornography.<sup>11</sup> We need to stress, however, that not all sexual offenders are addicted to sex and not all sexual addicted persons commit sexual offences and/or crimes.<sup>12</sup> The question then is, when can one be said to be suffering from sexual addiction? Who is addicted to sex? What are the signs and/or symptoms indicating sexual addiction?

Writing on “Symptoms of Sexual Addiction”, Herkov maintains that clinicians and researchers, in the absence of official diagnoses for sexual addiction, have resorted to the use of certain criteria to describe the incidence of sexual addiction. They include, but possibly not limited to, the situation where an individual is:

- Frequently engaging in more sex and with more partners than intended.
- Being preoccupied with or persistently craving sex; wanting to cut down and unsuccessfully attempting to limit sexual activity.
- Thinking of sex to the detriment of other activities or continually engaging in excessive sexual practices despite a desire to stop.
- Spending considerable time in activities related to sex, such as cruising for partners or spending hours online visiting pornographic Web sites.
- Neglecting obligations such as work, school or family in pursuit of sex.

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Griffiths Sex Addiction on the Internet, 189.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Herkov, “What is Sexual Addiction” <http://psychcentral.com/lib/2006/what-is-sexual-addiction>. Accessed on 31/1/12.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ralph H. Earle and Marcus R. Earle, *Sex Addiction: Case Studies and Management*, 1.

- Continually engaging in the sexual behaviour despite negative consequences, such as broken relationships or potential health risks.
- Escalating scope or frequency of sexual activity to achieve the desired effect, such as more frequent visits to prostitutes or more sex partners.
- Feeling irritable when unable to engage in the desired behaviour.<sup>13</sup>

Herkov cites the fourth volume of *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders* as seeing sexual addiction as the “distress about a pattern of repeated sexual relationships involving a succession of lovers who are experienced by the individual only as things to be used.”<sup>14</sup> According to the manual, Herkov further maintains, “sex addiction also involves ‘compulsive searching for multiple partners, compulsive fixation on an unattainable partner, compulsive masturbation, compulsive love relationships and compulsive sexuality in a relationship.’”<sup>15</sup> It has been well said that the world of the sexual addict revolves around sex.<sup>16</sup> Russell Willingham maintains that all sexual addictions revolve around a need in the victim’s life. He argues that even though quite often sexually addicted persons think that their greater need is sex, the reality is that they need love. Like the need of hunger that is not satisfied, the sexual addict will live a life of perpetual hunger for love and that drives him to look for solution to his problem from the wrong source – sexual ecstasies.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly, one can conclude from the foregoing that if an individual is suffering from sexual addiction, just as all the other addictions do to their victims, he loses self-control. This individual loses his freedom and ability to exercise discretion. He now lives under the control of sex and is mastered by it. As far as such an addicted individual is concerned, sex has lost its pleasurable possibilities and has now turned into a wicked monster pestering his life with no relief in sight. We need to remind ourselves that, the creation accounts in Genesis chapters one and two make it amply clear that the human being is supposed to be the master of God’s creation and not to be mastered by

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Herkov, “Symptoms of Sexual Addiction” <http://psychcentral.com/lib/2006/symptoms-of-sexual-addiction>. Accessed on 18/06/12.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Herkov, “What is Sexual Addiction.”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Herkov, “Symptoms of Sexual Addiction.”

<sup>17</sup> Russell Willingham, *Breaking Free: Understanding Sexual Addiction & the Healing Power of Jesus* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1999), 26.

it. The human being is to be mastered and controlled by none other than God in whose image he has been made and who is his ground of being. To be addicted to anything, whether sex or any other, and be mastered by it should, therefore, be seen as an unhealthy situation which defeats the creational mandate that the human is to exercise dominion. The human being is to be the chief steward of God's creation and not to be enslaved by it. The human can, however, exercise this function as a responsible steward if and only if he knows who he really is. Indeed, the human being must know his true identity in order to live out his full potential in God's created world.

### **B. Understanding the Human Being's True Identity**

Earle and Earle have rightly pointed out that any effective treatment of sexual addiction will have to take into account the spiritual worldview of the addicted person. They argue that the addict's attitude toward questions regarding religion can lead to major diagnostic clues about the addict's situation. They mention, among other things, that an addict's consciousness of the fact that his life is serving a useful purpose and whether or not he sees God's grace as a basis for forgiveness, for example, can enhance the clinician's work of helping this addicted person.<sup>18</sup> It is with this as a point of departure that we argue in this paper that a proper understanding of the individual's true identity in Christ as a new creation can lead the sexual addicted person to a new-found freedom and a healthy sexual lifestyle. Our main focus in this discussion is how young male addicted persons can find freedom from sexual addiction with the proper understanding of who they are in Christ. We therefore maintain that if young male persons know who Christ has made them, they are more likely to find fulfilment as those made in the image of God to be stewards in God's creation. The question therefore, is, what is meant by the human being having been made in the image of God? We will digress a little bit into the creation accounts in Genesis 1-2 to find out what being made in the image of God as a human being is all about and how knowing this as our true identity as humans helps us to live fulfilling sexual lives.

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<sup>18</sup> Ralph H. Earle and Marcus R. Earle, *Sex Addiction: Case Studies and Management*, 12.



## 1. The Human Being as the Crown of God's Creation

Bible scholars see Genesis chapter one, part of which (1:26-27) talks of the human being having been made in the image of God, as the work of the Priestly Writer (PW).<sup>19</sup> PW's work is believed to be the last of the Pentateuch to be written even though it appears first in Genesis. Scholars see this work in general as the priestly response to the big discussion that took centre stage among the Jews during and immediately after the exile in Babylon. Jerusalem had been destroyed with the Temple, the symbol of God's presence among his people, broken down. What used to be a beautiful walled city filled with pomp and pageantry, that characterised the festive occasions as well as other religious and priestly rituals, had been reduced to rubble – Israel's fortunes had turned into old folks' fables and illusions. The PW's writing in Genesis 1 sought to answer questions bothering the average Jewish man or woman walking down the deserted streets of Jerusalem at this time such as these: Where is God in the midst of all these hopelessness – voidness and emptiness? What is the origin of the cosmos? What is the purpose behind reality? Genesis one therefore provides a solution to the question of “voidness” and/or “emptiness” which confronted the Jews at this time. The answer is found in the fact of a Divine Creator who alone overcame the voidness and emptiness that existed and created the human being in his own image to rule over all God had made.<sup>20</sup>

What the average Jew suffered after the exile in the form of hopelessness and/or emptiness, the sexual addict, to a very large extent, suffers. The addicted person thinks he has hit the bottom of the pit. There seems to be no solution to his addiction problem. The story below describes what the average addicted person goes through.

I am a 22 year old man and I am very worried about where my life is headed. I seem to live 2 completely separate lives.. Everyone sees me as a well adjusted young man in a committed relationship (I have been dating my high school sweetheart whom I love more than anything). But when I get home all I can do is go onto anonymous chat sites looking for cyber-sex. It started out with an hour or two here and there but it has gotten to the point where I am staying up until 5 in the morning and then waking up at 8 just to get back onto the sites.

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<sup>19</sup> Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1:1-11: A Continental Commentary*, trans. John Scullion (London: SPCK, 1984), 1ff.

<sup>20</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), xii.



And when I am on these sites I am not the person I want to be. The longer I have been on them the more I want to push the envelope..I know I shouldn't and I'm ashamed of what I'm doing but younger girls become more appealing to me when I am anonymous. I'm not even attracted to them but the thrill of doing something so wrong arouses me. It's disgusting. I need to stop because I have made the mistake of giving out more personal information like email or skype to younger girls and I don't want to end up in jail. I don't want to lose my girlfriend and I don't want to be like this anymore. As soon as I log off I feel such remorse and disgust towards myself. Please I need help I don't want to go down this road anymore.<sup>21</sup>

What any sexual addict, like this young man, needs to know is his bearings as a child of God. From this vantage position, he can retrace his steps back to the waiting arms of his creator in whose image he has been made, then he will find healing. Knowing who we are can help us to know and identify what has gone wrong in order to find an appropriate antidote.

## 2. The Human as a Sexual Being Made in the Image of God

The human being is the very “image” and “likeness” of God. According to Phyllis Tribble, the identity expressed in *God* and *in the image of God* as expressed in Genesis 1:27 emphasises the similarities that exist between the human and God. However, the phrase *the image of God* points out the difference that exists between the Creator and the created.<sup>22</sup> This means that even though there is something that basically links the human being to God, the human being is simply not God but only *like* God. Von Rad thinks that God creating the human being “in the image of God” points to the fact that God chose to hide himself among the heavenly beings and at the same time revealed himself among his created beings.<sup>23</sup> What we can say from this is that, on one hand, God has chosen to hide himself among the heavenly beings as the Transcendent One, and on the other, chosen to reveal himself among his created beings as the Immanent One. God did not create the human being “like God” but “in the likeness of God”. God only showed part of himself in the human being. The

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<sup>21</sup> [www.mdjunction.com/forums/sex-addiction-discussions/general-support/3133866-young-man-worried-about-ruining-his-life](http://www.mdjunction.com/forums/sex-addiction-discussions/general-support/3133866-young-man-worried-about-ruining-his-life). Accessed on 01/06/12.

<sup>22</sup> Phyllis Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 20-21.

<sup>23</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, 58.

human being was to be just *an image* and *a likeness* of God and not God Himself/Herself.

Let us ask ourselves, so what is meant by the human being having been made in the *image of God*? One writer explains that it means that the human has been made in a *god-like* form and “as miniature god-like replicas to roam over the earth” and to take care of it so that the other creatures could look at him and readily see his godlike form as a mark of divine authority.<sup>24</sup> Sibley W. Towner suggests that an image was a three-dimensional object like statues or amulets which abounded in the OT period. Ancient kings put their statues at vantage points within the cities or towns over which they had extended their rule but in which they were not physically present. Towner believes that the idea of the human being having been made in the image of God should be understood in terms of the human bearing God’s statue to indicate God’s presence in God’s creation, even though not physically discernible. The human being bears the *statue* of God – the Great King of all creation.<sup>25</sup> From this position then, it should be understood that quite unlike the immovable statues of the ancient kings in the various corners of towns and cities over which they exercised dominion, the human being is the mobile *statue* of God in every corner of God’s creation. The image of God borne by the human being implies that he symbolizes the Creator’s very presence in the various corners of God’s creation. Indeed, the images in the forms of statues and amulets of kings could neither walk, speak nor hear. The image of God which is the human being can move, talk, hear and be heard in God’s creation. The human being as the image of God, still quite unlike the images of wood and stone, is capable of responding to the loving gestures of his Creator. Towner agrees rightly with D. J. Hall that the image of God in the human has *substantial* and *relational* dimensions.<sup>26</sup>

From a “substantialist” standpoint, the image of God is seen as that which embodies some sort of spiritual, physical, or emotional substance and/or attribute in the human. The “relationalist”, on the other hand, considers the image as the kind of special relationship

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<sup>24</sup> David M. Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 21.

<sup>25</sup> Sibley W. Towner, *Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 26.

<sup>26</sup> Sibley W. Towner, *Genesis*, 27.

which exists between the human and God and which places the human in relationship with the rest of creation. To be created in the image of God then, using a category from today's age of computer, is to be relationally *programmed* with a *default* for relationships. A relationship with God in whose image the human has been created and with his fellow humans with whom he stands created. The human being does not exist outside relationship. He is custom-made for relationship and cannot function outside one. The human then finds his true identity in relationship. Put differently, the humanness of the human being lies in the human *in* relationship. The human is in relationship with the Creator – the ground of his being – ; with his fellow human being with whom he stands co-created; and with the rest of creation over which the human has been called to exercise dominion (Genesis 1:26).

The Hebrew phrase *wayyibəra'* found in Genesis 1:27, which is often rendered “*and he created*” can also be rendered “*so he created*”.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, *so he created* as used in Genesis 1:27 can be seen as an adverbial clause of reason explaining the purpose behind the Divine *consultative assembly* to create the human being as Genesis 1:26 advocates. The human being was therefore, created to exercise dominion over the rest of creation and not to be ruled or dominated by it. However, not only was the human being created in the image of God to enable him function in this role of exercising dominion, he was made a sexual being as male and female, among other possibilities, to express sexual passion and to be fruitful. Seen from this position, the creation of the human, first in the image and likeness of God, and secondly as male and female, clearly has something to do with taking care of the rest of creation and sustaining it. We can conclude conveniently then, by saying that the creation of the human in the image of God and as male and female – thus with sexuality – were all meant for the exercising of dominion over creation and taking care of it (compare Genesis 2:15).

The injunction *to have dominion* was not meant to give the human being a field day over the rest of creation. The word *rādāh* rendered “to have dominion” in some translations, can also be

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<sup>27</sup> F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004) [BDB], s.v. arb.

rendered “to rule” or “to govern”.<sup>28</sup> According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, *to rule* is to govern or exercise control.<sup>29</sup> Obviously, exercising dominion as governing a nation or exercising control over a game as a referee or an umpire demands fairness and application of set rules rather than the display of arbitrariness. The human being’s role to exercise dominion therefore, does not in any way enjoin him to manipulate and abuse the rest of creation. The situation where the human being is seen to be exploiting everything within his reach in God’s creation, including sex, for his personal gratification, even at the expense of others and peril of his own life, is to be rejected as anti-creational and anti-God. The human being does not have absolute freedom in God’s creation to do as he pleases. The human bears the *statue* of God symbolising God’s supreme presence wherever he finds himself and should be seen to be maintaining God’s dominion over these places. It should, however, be borne in mind that the human exercises this special responsibility as a person made in the image of the Creator. Joseph Blenkinsopp maintains that the command to the human to exercise dominion was pointing to the relationship between the human and other life forms. For Blenkinsopp then, “it should at least be noted that where the corresponding Hebrew verb (*rādāh*) occurs, the emphasis is generally on the humane exercise of authority”<sup>30</sup> To some extent, the human exercises dominion, as co-creator since he bears the special *statue* of the Creator. Any dominion the human exercises over any part of creation, including his fellow human beings as well as himself, without due diligence to his identity as a person made in the image and likeness of God, makes such exercise anti-creational and therefore *in-human*. The human being should understand, therefore, that he lives out and exercises his sexuality in a way that promotes rather than endangers the mandate given to him to exercise *dominion*.

To say that the human has been made in the image of God is to imply that the human represents God in God’s creation just as the statues and amulets are symbols and representations of the ancient kings. The human being brings some *God-ness* or some semblance of

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<sup>28</sup> BDB, s.v. **רָדָה**.

<sup>29</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, s.v. “rule.”

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation*, 25-6.

God into any part of creation where he finds himself. He is simply made “as miniature godlike replicas to roam the earth.”<sup>31</sup> Roaming the earth as miniature godlike replica, and bringing about *God-ness* or God’s semblance call for demonstrating some of the obvious qualities displayed by God toward creation. These qualities include purposefulness, proper planning, decisiveness, consultation as well as communion. From this position, for the expression of sexual desires to be human is for them to be purposeful, well-planned and well thought-through, as well as a shared experience rather than the irresponsible dissipation of selfish gratification and exploitation of oneself and/or the other.

The human as male and female in the image of God points to the fact that sexuality, and for that matter, sex, is so close to God. Sex is divine. God is the originator and sole designer of sexuality and sex. God meant sex to function for the good of the human being. In fact, after creating everything, including human sexuality, with all its passionate possibilities, God saw that all was *very good* (Genesis 1:31). The human being does engage in sex, therefore, in a humane and responsible manner befitting a person who bears God’s special stamp and/or semblance. Following from that, for any individual to become addicted to sex and fall under its dictatorial rule and dominion clearly runs counter to God’s creational intentions. This sad state of affairs, however, becomes possible because Scripture teaches that something basically went wrong with the human being. There is, therefore, the need to ask ourselves the question: How sound is the image of God in the human being? Is the image of God still intact or corrupted through the disobedience and the fall? What happened to the image of God within the human being when he disobeyed God?

### **3. The Human Being as a Fallen One**

Through the act of disobedience, human life got turned away from the Author of life unto the self.<sup>32</sup> John Calvin, for instance, thought that the image of God in the human was destroyed at the

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<sup>31</sup> David M. Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality and the Bible*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: In Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 49.

fall.<sup>33</sup> Calvin saw the fall as “the miserable condition into which man has fallen”.<sup>34</sup> As far as he was concerned, the human was far from the purity originally conferred on him. Calvin maintained that at creation, not only did God “animate a vessel of clay, God made it the habitation of an immortal spirit.”<sup>35</sup> At the fall however, Calvin argued, the human became alienated from the “Father of Lights” and as a result, became so immersed in darkness.<sup>36</sup> Calvin, however, pointed out that the light in the human was not completely quenched to leave him in darkness such that he could lose all sense of immortality. He was of the view that the human conscience by which he was able to distinguish between good and evil still responded to the judgement of God. We are aware of the huge theological debate surrounding Calvin’s position on the fall of the human and we do not want to plunge our heads into this since that is not our immediate focus in this discussion. Our interest here is simply to press home the point, as mentioned above, that something has gone wrong with the human being leaving in its trail challenges like sexual addiction. We can however, argue that whatever the human lost in the first Adam, was restored in the second Adam who is Christ. Paul has pointed out that if one is in Christ, then that person has become a new creation with the old passing away. Let us, therefore, explore the privileged position occupied by the human being who is now in Christ.

#### 4. The Human Being as a New Creature

Paul Barnett sees the “new creation” in contrast to the “old” or the former. Christ’s death and resurrection inaugurates the new covenant in the new creation and thus brings to an end the deeds of the old. The believer has died to the things of the old or former creation. They were the godless, self-centred lifestyle that was lived according to the dictates of the flesh (Romans 8:4). However, these have passed away and no longer control nor dictate to the believer

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<sup>33</sup> John Calvin, “Genesis”, trans. by John King, (Edinburgh: Banner of Trust and Truth, 1992), 94.

<sup>34</sup> John Calvin, “Institutes of the Christian Religion” transl. by Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), i.160.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, i. 161.

who is now “in Christ”. The believer must be controlled, governed and led by the Spirit of God (Ephesians 5:18; Romans 8:14).<sup>37</sup>

C. K. Barrett sees all human life since Adam as life that was lived unto the human being himself and for his own benefit. Instead of living for his Creator, the human, as a result of Adam’s sin, “sought to control life by and for himself.”<sup>38</sup> This led to death. The human died when he sinned (Romans 6:23). This death can be described physically, psychologically and spiritually. Physically, he lost the cordial relationship that existed between him and God. He could no longer come face to face with God. The human chose to hide from God instead of coming face to face with him. Psychologically, the human got so disturbed that meeting God no longer looked pleasant unto him. It was too much for him to face God and to be confronted with the consequences of his action. Spiritually, the human was to lose God’s garden filled with God’s presence and participation. However, these are the very things Christ’s death and resurrection destroyed (2 Corinthians 5:15). Christ’s once-and-for-all death to sin was the death of all humanity willing to die with him. The one who has died with Christ has since ceased to live unto the flesh. To live one’s life unto the flesh is “to have one’s gaze focused upon all that flesh means and limited thereby to this world.”<sup>39</sup> If we live unto the flesh we have our minds fixed upon existence without God. A life lived unto the flesh is a life lived in accordance of the whims and caprices of the perverted human nature. The human nature is not perverted here because it is material but because it has totally fallen away from God and is now anthropocentered. To live unto the flesh or anthropocentrically, is to have one’s estimates based on purely human considerations.<sup>40</sup> However, the believer has had this self-centred nature nailed to the cross with Christ (Galatians 2:20). The believer no longer lives unto himself but unto Christ who died and rose again for him.

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<sup>37</sup> Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 297-8.

<sup>38</sup> C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1973), 169.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*



Margaret E. Thrall thinks that in 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul is talking about “new creation” in terms of the old order in contrast to the new. It is about the kind of change in status which comes about as a result of a person’s entry into the community of believers. It is a type of transformation that translates the worthless creature into a more useful being. To be in Christ is to belong to Christ by faith. It means one belongs to Christ as a result of one’s participation in his death and resurrection. This has therefore transported the believer from the present age to the age to come. It could also mean “in the sphere of Christ’s power or personal unity of the believer with Christ. To be in Christ is to be added to the community which is the body of Christ.”<sup>41</sup>

From this envious position, the believer is to see his body as the temple of God in which God’s honour dwells. As the temple in which God’s honour or presence fills and dwells, the human is to express God’s praiseworthiness for all to hear and see. As a new creation, he has now turned his attention as well as affections away from himself unto Christ. The life that he now lives, he lives unto him who loved him and gave his life for him (2Corinthians 5:15). Any man living his life from this biblical perspective, is under the control and support of the Holy Spirit. A life controlled by the Spirit of God cannot fall under sexual addiction or any kind of addiction for that matter, except an ever increasing “addiction” to knowing and doing his will. A man filled with the power of the Spirit of God and whose affections now centre around that which brings glory and honour to God will not use his sexuality as a male person – his masculinity – as a tool for sexual exploitation. There is therefore a shift of focus for the man who is in Christ. A focus that enables him render his “members to God as instruments for righteousness”(Romans 6:11-14).

There would be the need for a shift from masculinity that makes a young man see himself in terms of being in competition with other men in sexual experimentation, as some men erroneously think. The typical mindset of men, and young men for that matter, is that women are to be dominated and used to satisfy their selfish sexual appetites. A man is to be aggressive and powerful. He is to take full control and

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<sup>41</sup> Margaret E. Thall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 420-5.

be in charge. For the typical man then, his sexual partner should be passive, weak and submissive to all his sexual escapades so as to enhance his maleness and/or manhood. From this unfortunate lopsided position, sexual expression is pushed beyond the edge for the man and he soon slips into the abyss of sexual addiction. This is very much the case because this individual, instead of seeing sex as something that is shared with the other in order to find it fulfilling, keeps it to himself with the view to satisfying his parochial sexual interests using either himself or others. He keeps seeking and piling up sexual pleasures for himself and simply never gets fulfilled or satisfied. The more he seeks for it and gets it, whether by *fair* or foul means, the more he thinks he has not found it yet and yearns for it. This sets in motion a sexual-cycle which soon develops into a full grown unending and never-dying hunger for *real* sexual satisfaction which never comes. It is important to stress, at this juncture, that fulfilling sexual expression is dependent on the personality involved in the sexual act. It has everything to do with how one thinks of oneself, how one presents oneself, how one takes care of oneself and others, as well as how one respects oneself and others.<sup>42</sup> We are of the view that with a proper perspective to this beautiful gift of sexuality from God in its holistic dimensions, the addicted person can begin to crawl back from this hopeless abyss even if with initial difficulties or challenges. It is to this shift, therefore, that we want to turn now.

#### **D. Need for Paradigm Shift in Meaning of Masculinity**

Through firsthand experience from growing up in Africa, I have come to see how much masculinity is often seen mainly in terms of one's sexual prowess and/or "smartness". Being a man implies that one should possess the ability to have sex. If a woman said in Africa that someone is not a man, all she is implying is that she had directly or indirectly made it abundantly clear to the man in question to have sex with her but he has not been able to do so. If he was a man, why did he not have sex with her? The rule, therefore, is simple: if one is a man, one key way of proving it is to be able to penetrate a woman. Failure to penetrate is a failure to prove oneself. As young boys in our

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<sup>42</sup> See [www.pposbc.org/education/youngmen.asp](http://www.pposbc.org/education/youngmen.asp) accessed on 12th May, 2012-05-1.

elementary school days, a group of boys, and in isolated cases girls, would, unknown to a boy or a girl or even both, arrange and get these two into a room and lock it leaving the two alone in the room. If the boy was not able to *have sex* with the girl for any reason, he was not a man. He was called names and shunned by his friends. Meanwhile, news about it would be fast making rounds in the girls' quarters that this particular boy was given a girl but he failed to prove himself as a man with the girl. Until the boy accepted the challenge to *prove* himself, he would lose any respect he had as a "man".

Kopano Ratele buttresses this position by pointing out that among certain tribes in Africa, the penis is seen as a stick and the vagina, a hole. A hole just needs a stick to be placed in it and it is as simple as that. Therefore, "a man who is perceived not to be using his stick or not filling holes is...referred to as *isishumane* – an object of ridicule."<sup>43</sup> Ratele claims that this situation is not limited to Africans alone. He believes that it is global by maintaining that "...sex as an important constitutive theme of manhood appears to be true for other countries of the world as well."<sup>44</sup> Ratele stresses further that,

Nearly everywhere in the world, manliness is closely associated with our sexual partner(s), the sexual appeal of our partner(s), the size of our penises, the claims we make about our sexual stamina, whether we can maintain healthy erection and how virile we are. These are just few examples, yet they go to the heart of how sex is used to construct a particular form of masculinity and manliness.<sup>45</sup>

With this unfortunate philosophy, that manhood is reducible to the ability of a man's penis, at the back of their minds then, several young men would often take undue advantage of innocent girls by either raping or abusing them sexually. The ability to prove oneself can lead and, in fact, has led several young persons, mostly males, to suffer sexual addiction as they show their prowess by having sex with as many girls as they could find. We are of the view that it is wrong to reduce manhood and/or maleness – masculinity – to the ability of the penis. One does not have to perform sexually to prove oneself that one is a man. One is a man simply because he is born one and so even if his penis has been lost, he is still a man anyway. Masculinity is

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<sup>43</sup> Kopano Ratele, *Male Sexualities and Masculinities* in Sylvia Tamale, ed., "African Sexualities: A Reader" (Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2011), 399.

<sup>44</sup> Kopano Ratele, *Male Sexualities and Masculinities*, 399.

<sup>45</sup> Kopano Ratele, *Male Sexualities and Masculinities*, 399.

more than wearing a penis and penetrating so-called women’s “holes” with it. Masculinity, from the creation point of view as outlined above, is too responsible to be reduced to smartness and a mere show of one’s prowess through sexual adventurism. Masculinity must be holistic to be truly masculine or manly. True masculinity, as far as we are concerned, then, should be defined by the creational values seen in the first man created as he patiently waited and remained alone till a helpmate was found for him. True masculinity is seen in the respect he accorded the woman as he woke up from his deep slumber to find her by his side. It is also the recognition that the woman had been taken out of him and therefore they belonged together, to the extent of accepting to eat the fruit, of which he had earlier on been forbidden to eat from by his maker, with her. They belong together and would simply share a common fate in that sense. The woman commanded his respect to the extent that for her sake he, and not she, was ready to leave all in order to spend the rest of his time with her. She is a woman because she is taken out of the man and shares common identity with him. She deserves a name for she is not to be treated as one of the ordinary objects found in the garden. Flowing from this then, it is important that masculinity from a Christian standpoint takes into account some of these positive attitudes in line with the biblical tradition on the creation of the human being rather than the lopsided exploitative and domineering ones often displayed by men. Obviously, any young man who starts off with the mindset that sees the female counterpart only as sexual objects to be used to satisfy his sexual pleasure, risks graduating into a full-grown sexual addict.

#### **E. The Way of Recovery for the Sexually Addicted Person**

Having travelled this far, we would now turn our attention to how the addicted person can find healing and freedom from his plight. Russell Willingham rightly admits that sexual addiction, which should not be seen only as a moral weakness but also as something involving chemical changes in the body, requires extremely hard work in order to overcome it. He concedes that the addiction cycle itself is so powerful a thing to reckon with which demands the assistance of people who know what is going on within the addicted person. Willingham, however, mentions three important areas that must be explored by the addict for the solution to his problem. These three

areas are biblical recovery; biblical sexuality; and biblical spirituality.<sup>46</sup>

### 1. Biblical Recovery

Willingham bemoans the current state of the church of Jesus Christ. He laments that the church was not supposed to be *of* the world even though it is *in* the world. However, the church has become so worldly today. He pointed out that it is sad to find in a survey that there is only 2% difference between those who would conservatively remain faithful to their marital vows in the church and those who are not believers. Willingham asserts that a greater percentage of men in the church are involved in sexual misdemeanours including the watching of x-rated movies, phone sex, pornography and nude clubs.<sup>47</sup> With this sad state of affair, sexual addicted persons are not likely to receive the needed help from the church today. It is as a result of this that Willingham calls for a return to the centrality of Scripture. A return to the authority of Scripture can help the addicted person retrace his steps into freedom. He who does not come under the authority of the word of God in this life is behaving like the seafarer who sails at sea with a broken compass. He risks drifting about on the big ocean heading nowhere in particular and opened to all kinds of possible dangers at sea.

The addicted person should return to Scripture and submit to it for there he will find his way back to the source of the “abundant life” (John10:10). The word of God will help the addicted person avoid two types of dangers which Willingham talks about. These are the deterministic position which makes the sexually addicted person fail to take responsibility for his actions but instead blames them on an inevitable cause and also the mindset that the ultimate goal in life is happiness or what feels good for a person. Indeed, the word of God says that the human being is a sinner and has fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and sexual addiction is but one of such many sinful behaviours which place the human outside God’s glory. Submission to the word of God will lead the addicted person to take responsibility for his plight and accept that he has a problem and needs help. Submission to the word of God by the addicted person is a

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<sup>46</sup> Russell Willingham, *Breaking Free*, 49-50.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

decision to walk in the light just as He is in the light. Then the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son is able to cleanse the individual from all sin (1 John 1:7) including sexual addiction. The word of God tells the addicted person who has now submitted to the authority of Scripture he is no longer a slave to sin and that sin no longer has dominion over him because he has accepted the forgiving and cleansing activities of Christ. Therefore, even though submission to the authority of Scripture may bring the sexually addicted person face to face with the fact that he is responsible for his actions because he is a sinner and that "the soul that sinneth; it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4), the word of God does not leave him in his hopeless and gloomy situation. Surely, the word of God assures the sexual addict that renewal is possible. The word of God tells him that it is possible that his life would be turned around again for Christ came that he might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Certainly, all could become new again if he totally submits to Christ for "... if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17 ASV). Willingham makes it categorically clear that the addicted person should wholly "...embrace Jesus Christ and the document that reveals his nature and directives – the Bible." He concludes that "Without this initial, basic step no genuine recovery is possible."<sup>48</sup>

## **2. Biblical Sexuality**

Willingham takes a stock of the sexual challenges in society today including the open promiscuity, the numerous babies born without responsible parental care, and the high epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, one can easily tell the consequences of living sexual lives dictated by our feelings and our glands. The sexually addicted persons should therefore, go to the Bible to find out what it teaches about these issues, and, of course, about sex in general. Although the mere head knowledge about these sexual issues from the Bible may not do all the saving for a person, such knowledge could, however, form the intellectual basis for a person's sexuality – one that is solidly founded on the word of God. If an addicted person is ready to embrace this knowledge and attempts

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 52.

to walk according to it, with others supporting him, he will come to find the profound wisdom behind the Bible which many people consider to be archaic. Touching on pornography and masturbation, Willingham stresses that the latter provides the payoff for the former. Indeed, masturbation enables the sexually addicted person skip all demands a mature relationship would make of him paving the way for him to relate to a world of fantasy. In this world of fantasy, fuelled and powered by the pornography industry, the woman's body becomes his god. Like Paul argues in Romans 1:23-25, the sexually addicted person is now worshipping the creature and not the Creator. Willingham therefore, concludes that masturbation is simply a mismanagement of the emotions of the sexually addicted person, which, apart from keeping the door to sexual addiction wide open, contravenes biblical sexuality.<sup>49</sup>

### 3. Biblical Spirituality

Willingham points out, that no matter how much good support system the addicted person has, and the good understanding of biblical sexuality he has, if he fails to grasp basic truths about biblical spirituality, the other pillars would be of no effect. He submits that "To the degree he is broken, to that degree he must connect with the Lord and with the Lord's people if he hopes to recover."<sup>50</sup> Willingham mentions the church, prayer and Scripture as three things he finds to be key regarding biblical spirituality. On the church, Willingham emphasises that the addicted person must get connected to a body of believers for sound spiritual nourishment. Indeed, there may be several reasons why the church may not look attractive to us sometimes. However, the caution at Hebrews 10:25 should be taken seriously for if the sexually addicted person neglects fellowshiping with other believers, he is more likely to continue labouring under the yoke of slavery unto sex.

Regarding the importance of prayer in the life of the sexual addict who now is seeking recovery, Willingham cautions that God will not support a prayerless recovery. Therefore, no matter what books or tapes on recovery that he listens to; or revival meeting he attends; or amount of support he receives from a support group or a

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 55-8.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 59/60.



church; if he fails to commune with God in a more personal way, his recovery will be very difficult, if not impossible.<sup>51</sup> We cannot but agree with Willingham on this. It is a matter of fact that through prayer the addict is going to develop an intimate personal relationship with God. He should, therefore, develop a new secret place with God for he needs to discover how to hide oneself in the “secret place of the Most High”(Psalm 91:1-2) so as to find protection from the enemy of his soul ruining his life through sexual addiction. This discovery, however, comes only through a life of consistent and constant prayer.

The sexually addicted person, coming out of his secret world of fantasy, has objects and things he relates to, usually in his secrecy. For the addict therefore, the secret place is the key that unlocks his vulnerability. Secret places generally render him vulnerable. He becomes vulnerable and slips down his usual abyss as soon as he is left alone in his secrecy. However, through prayer, the addicted person will begin to learn how to develop a new secret place of a personal relationship with God. When all else have left him, and the world goes silent around him in this new secret place, he turns and there is God waiting for him to show himself faithful on his behalf. He will soon find that God is a Saviour who descends into his situation to assist him. The addicted person should bear in mind that when the human being sinned and needed to be saved, God did not just sit up there and shouted the rules of salvation to him down here, and waited for him to respond or apply them. God came down in the person of his only Son to live in our human situation in order to save us. Indeed, God is a Friend who comes down to our miserable state of vulnerability to assist us. He is the Comforter who walks besides us to lend support and the addicted person will soon discover these rich truths as he interacts with God privately through prayer.

On Scripture, Willingham points out that many people know that they have to read their Bible however, not everybody does. Some of the things that keep several people away from their Bibles include feeling too busy to read, finding the Bible too difficult to understand, finding the Bible boring to read and finding the Bible irrelevant to one’s need. These challenges notwithstanding however, the sexually addicted person will see himself growing healthily on the road to

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 61

recovery if he embraces the truths the word of God gives him.<sup>52</sup> The word of God is full of wise sayings which, if addict will confess to himself, can help him to overcome his challenge. For example, the Psalmist has said that he has stored the word of God in his heart so he would not sin against God (Psalm 119:11). The same psalm asks the question “How can a young man keep his way pure?” and provides the answer by emphasising that it is “By living according to your word” (Psalm 119:9 NIV). This means that if any young man, and that includes the sexually addicted person, wants to live a victorious fulfilling live, he has to go back to the word of God, not only to read it but also to store it in his heart. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, three times he said “it is written” and he quoted Scripture. One can only quote a Scripture already memorised and stored in one’s mind. As thoughts of slipping back into one’s former state of sexual addiction flood into the recovering mind of the addict, he can only counteract them by quoting scriptural verses he has memorized to himself. As he continues to exercise his liberated mind in Scripture this way, he will soon realize that his focus as well as desires in general are gradually changing.

We suggest therefore, that the addicted person should read the word of God, memorize relevant verses to apply them when the need arises. One way of doing it is to confess these verses unto himself, if possible as many times as possible daily, as he would his prescribed medication. This way his soul will begin to be in tune with God. Pleasing God and loving him, rather than sex, would become his new pre-occupation. Jesus says “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Again Jesus told the disciples “Already ye are clean because of the word I have spoken unto you”(John 15:3). Indeed, it is the word of God in the heart of the child of God that keeps his heart from sin which pollutes it. The sexual addict who is seeking recovery needs God’s word in his heart if he is to break free from the wicked claws of sexual pollution.

#### **F. Living Out One’s Sexuality as a New Creation**

So far, we have suggested some helpful ways by which a sexually addicted young man can find healing from his addiction. Before we

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 62-3.

end this important discussion, however, we want to share five positive attitudes that young men could develop towards sex to enable them live healthy sexual lifestyles.

### **1. Sex Should be Responsible and Shared to be Refreshing**

We have noted from the creation account that sex was intended by the Creator to be shared. We can therefore, conclude that sex that is shared is responsible sex in line with the creation standard. Sex should be shared to be responsible because the human was created male and female to share in the same divine image. As has been said elsewhere in this paper, very often, masculinity has centred around a man's ability to do sexual exploits. A man's maleness, has for a long time, been grounded on his sexual expertise. Real sex has almost always come to be associated with the display of the penis.<sup>53</sup> The notion that boys and men demonstrate masculinity better when they are "smart" enough to rape the girl/woman on their first date for instance, is counter to the Divine intentions.

A girl made an important remark in a focus group discussion towards a research project being undertaken by this writer. She remarked that she has a school mate who is a boy and this "guy", as she calls him, is in the habit of flirting around with several girls. What worries this girl however, is the fact that this guy keeps telling her that, in future when he becomes of age and is ready to marry, he would like to have a virgin for a wife. The girl wondered why this boy could fool around with girls who would be the future wives of other men but whose virginity this boy has broken, and having done all that to leave them for a virgin in the end. With such a secret desire to be married to a virgin at back of the mind of this boy, the question is, should not this boy also keep his virginity for his future wife as something to share with only her? If some guys who could be the potential husbands of these girls whose virginities this boy is exploiting now for his selfish ends, decide not to marry these girls in future because they have lost their virginity, what would be their fate? If this boy would not marry them after using them, who should? We are inclined to think that equity demands that he who is looking for a virgin for a wife should keep himself a virgin. Simple. Sex is to be a

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<sup>53</sup> Kopano Ratele, *Male Sexualities and Masculinities*, 399.

shared-experience to make it fulfilling. However, if it is to be shared equitably, then it calls for faithful partners or else one cheats on the other.

We have sufficiently emphasised that selfish sexual gratification through exploitation of oneself in a solo-sex or with others, defeats the creational order in which sex was purposefully placed between two people who had been made for each other as sexual partners. It is upon the strength of this that this discussion suggests a life of sexual deferment or abstinence as the most equitable way of sharing one's sexual self only with one's future lover to young persons. Several pains and hurts, including possible sexual addiction, are likely to be avoided if this clarion call would be heeded.

Steven Tracy seems to share the above position by criticizing the modern argument by young people that once they are in love, they should be allowed to have sexual intercourse with those they love. These young ones claim that after all they would one day be married to these persons and, therefore, what they are doing now is to help them adjust properly to this would-be partners once married. Tracy maintains that this situation is the outcome of the sexual revolution in the 1960s that promoted the idea that sexual expression is a right that people should be allowed to freely enjoy. Tracy, however, sees this line of argument as that which flies in the face of the clear biblical teaching which situates sex within the context of marriage.<sup>54</sup> Tracy gives five reasons why, he thinks sex should be abstained from and be reserved for one's marriage. These points are as follows:

- 1 Abstinance before marriage enhances personal and marital health
- 2 Abstinance before marriage increases the likelihood of being respected and treated with dignity
- 3 Abstinance before marriage helps one develop self-control and character necessary for a healthy marriage (and for life in general)
- 4 Abstinance before marriage guarantees that one will not have to deal with an unplanned pregnancy
- 5 Abstinance eliminates the threat of contracting STDs<sup>55</sup>

We find these five important truths very insightful and we think that if young men would order their sexual lives along such important

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<sup>54</sup> Steven Tracy , “Sex as a Gift from God: The Case for Premarital Sexual Abstinence” from <http://ebookbrowse.com/12-sex-gift-of-god-steinen-tracy-pdf-d304786499>. 4. Accessed on 19/6/12.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 4-10.

principles, they would save themselves from the unnecessary sexual experimentation which leads only to sexual addiction.

## 2. Sex Should be Productive

Creation was meant to be productive. Productive creation, therefore, is perceived to be God's preferred option for humanity. Everything in God's creation functions to fulfil a particular purpose or play a key role. Sex, created as an aspect of sexuality, functions along similar lines. Basically, sex fulfils two key functions: pleasure and procreation. The fact that not all people who marry with the desire to have children are able to produce children sometimes, even though they are reproductively fit, goes to strengthen the case that sex is not for only procreation. Again, the way God has designed the sexual organs, especially the female one, suggests that God did not create sex just for procreation as some Early Church Fathers would want us believe.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, God had in mind sexual pleasure when he fixed the female as well as the male sexual organs in front of them. If we take the clitoris in the female for instance, without it the woman can still give birth, even if with some challenges as in the case of those women who have gone through female genital mutilation or modification sometimes do experience during childbirth.<sup>57</sup> The one major usefulness that has come to characterize the female clitoris is sexual pleasure. This small part of the body within the female sexual organ is known to heighten or deepen the sexual pleasure that the woman experiences in sexual intercourse. Based on this one truth, then, one can build the case that God meant also that sex should bring pleasure to those engaging in it irrespective of whether or not it would lead to procreation.

From this lofty position then, if sex is neither for pleasure nor procreation, it becomes a fruitless venture. But we know from the definition of sexual addiction given at the beginning of our discussion that, for the sexually addicted person, sex has become something done out of compulsion and something over which he has lost control. Even though the emotionally troubled state that the addict goes through anytime he falls under the enslavement of sexual addiction

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<sup>56</sup> St Augustine of Hippo, "from The Good of Marriage" in Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., ed., *Theology and Sexuality* (Malden, MA: Backwell Publishing, 2002), 71-86.

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.medindia.net/news/view\\_news\\_main.asp?x=10906&t=11](http://www.medindia.net/news/view_news_main.asp?x=10906&t=11). Accessed on 21/06/12.

can be described as painful and hurting, he simply has lost control over it and cannot do anything to break free from it. From this position then, one can say that the sexually addicted person engages in sex not for pleasure. For this sexually addicted person, sex is doing to him more harm than good and as such has become fruitless venture. Paul admonishes us to be transformed by the renewal of our minds (Romans 12:1-2). If the sexually addicted person could live a transformed life, he needs to understand he is not doing sex for pleasure as he may deceive himself. Sex does not bring him any fulfilment and therefore needs not engage his energies uselessly. With this understanding, the addicted person can renew his mind and occupy himself with alternative useful ventures.

### **3. Sex Should Fulfill the Goodness of Ccreation**

After creating everything including human sexuality, God saw that all was very good (Gen. 1:31). Sex being part of God's creation is very good then. The impression one gets from the youth today is that sex, a very pleasurable thing, is being denied them and therefore they need to rebel against the status quo in order to enjoy sex. Taken from this angle, sex tends to be seen as an endangered specie that needs protection and strictest protestation for it to thrive in today's world. Young people being the crusaders and custodians of this laudable idea, find themselves doing all kinds of things to "drum" home the point that the adult population has imprisoned sex and the youth owe it a duty to liberate it.

We agree that the adult population is not doing well at all when it comes to educating the young generation about sex. Several children grow in homes where sex is never mentioned and young persons are left at the mercy of the media and the internet as their source of information. However, what every young man should know is that sex is a good thing as already stressed. Therefore if one allows oneself to get so hooked to sexual adventures such that breaking free from it becomes difficult and almost impossible, then it is not good enough. Sex loses its goodness and assumes the role of a tyrant if it begins to enslave the person engaging in it.

### **4. God Is Not Against Responsible Sexual Pleasure**

The point is worth emphasising that God is the originator and the kind donor of this wonderful gift of sexuality. The creation accounts affirm that after creating the man and the woman, God blessed them

and issued out a command to them to go and multiply. Obviously, this was a divine call on the two to have sex.<sup>58</sup> We have also said that after creating everything, God took a good look at all he had made, not excluding human sexuality and sexual passion, for that matter,<sup>59</sup> and God was satisfied that everything was very good. We can conveniently say, then, that God is not embarrassed about issues related to sex at all. God invented it and wanted it to be celebrated as such.

Following from the foregoing, we need to correct two erroneous impressions that push several young people into sexual captivity. Firstly it is wrong for anyone to think that sex is too dirty to be linked to God therefore the choice is between God and sex. One cannot have sex and God at the same time. Sadly, most young people will choose sex. But sex cannot be dirty because it is from God and has been blessed by him with a clear injunction to the man and woman to share it. If we continue to portray sex as something dirty which defiles people and makes them feel guilty, we risk driving our young persons into the sexual gloom of addiction and other related challenges for if sex is dirty, then the young man will stay outside the protection of the church and do his dirty job. We are of the opinion that if the church would lift sexuality from the floor and place it back on the altar where it belongs, our young persons would be helped to adopt positive and holistic sexual lifestyles.

There is another error which is committed against sexuality and it is this: several young persons have the notion that following God's will is to follow a whole bunch of rules and restrictions. Whenever God comes to our lives, they argue, he comes with lots of do's and don'ts. God would curtail our happiness with his numerous rules and restrictions. To enjoy ourselves and to have lots of fun requires kicking God out of the picture in order to have uninterrupted enjoyment. In Ghana today, where the writer comes from, several young persons stay outside the church from the period between their late teens to somewhere in their mid-thirties when they struggle with numerous sexual challenges as single people. This is precisely the case because, so far, the church seems not to have been able to present

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<sup>58</sup> Steven Tracy, "Sex as a Gift from God: The Case for Premarital Sexual Abstinence," 1.



sex to our youthful membership as something beautiful and pleasurable which God intends for our happiness and pleasure and which the young person develops positive attitude to. Normally, the church has only made the young person feel guilty and embarrassed because if we ever preach or teach about sex in the church, it is the usual outlining of the sexual restrictions which the young person is to guard against. The church should make amends. The church should teach a theology of sex which connects it to its right source. Sex has its source in God. God is never embarrassed by it and his church should not be.

This brings to mind when multitudes thronged upon Jesus and he taught them. When evening came, the multitude, having stayed all day with Jesus, needed food to eat but the disciples thought that such a task was actually impossible. Where were they going to find food for this huge crowd? They wondered and therefore suggested that Jesus should allow them go into the villages to find themselves some food. However, Jesus, made a profound statement by telling the disciples “They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat.” (Matt. 14:16 ASV). Indeed, the young person does not have to go outside the church to learn about sex. Surely they may collapse on the way. Like Jesus told the disciples, the youth need not go away, we need to give them holistic sex “to eat.”

We are inclined to argue, rather, that to enjoy God is to enjoy sex for it is he who gave it and blessed it for the pleasure of the human being. Therefore, the more we love him and stay closer to him, the more we understand what he has done and enjoy it better. If we love God, we would love what he has created and that includes our bodies. Love for God gives us the ability to, not only to enjoy what God has created, but also to take good care of it and maintain it. If young persons would understand sex from this perspective, the rebellion that makes them thrust God away from their sexual desires and end up getting drowned in illicit pleasures and addictions would give way to fulfilling and satisfying sexual lifestyles.

### **5. Jesus Was a Young Man Too**

Paul admonishes us to let the mind that was in Christ be in us also. Christ did not consider his divinity but put it aside and descended lowly into human history to live with us and to save us (Philippians 2:1-5). Starting his ministry when he was thirty and

finishing it in three years implies Jesus carried out his ministry and finished it still as a young man in his early thirties. The Bible says in (Hebrews 4:15) that Christ Jesus was tempted just like us but he never sinned. The writer of the book of Hebrews therefore calls on us to look up to him for support in times of our need (Hebrews 4:15-16).

This should challenge any young man who desires to live a life of obedience to the Lord that it is possible. For all such persons, Christ himself is their example. If Christ could devote his entire youthful life to fulfilling the will of his father and that has turned the world upside down for twenty-one centuries, now occupying a vantage point at the right-hand of his father with the readiness to assist those who look up to him for support, that is good news indeed. We wish to encourage the youth for whom sexual addiction has become a problem that Christ is willing to assist them. Unto all young persons, Christ should be their role model. The words of the following three stanzas of a hymn can serve as the food for thought for all young people who desire to experience the freedom that obedience to the will of God brings:

- 1 *Christ availed himself to us and left all His good samples*
- 2 *He gave to us that great charge To do as the Master will He ate, drunk with modesty without any malice too and He blessed what e're he ate He says "we should do likewise"*
- 3 *My teacher and bosom friend Look! I have not got much strength Fill me with your spirit too and I'll bear the fruits indeed.<sup>60</sup>*

### **Conclusion**

We live in a computer age. Sometimes when one experiences serious virus infection with some programmes corrupted, there comes the need to re-format the hard drive of the PC. Normally, such re-formatting sends the PC back to pre-virus infection stage when all was working fine. In several instances, the PC after the exercise, gets restored to its former status. Occasionally, however, some vital information may get lost. Let us see the sexually addicted person's situation as an experience of high "moral virus" infection. The sexually addicted person, in this discussion, has been called upon to remember his identity as one made in the image of God. It is true the

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<sup>60</sup> Presbyterian Church of Ghana English Hymnary100:1, 6,7.

image of God which, among other things, represents God's semblance in the individual, may have been tarnished by the problem of sexual addiction. However, the finished work of Christ provides forgiveness and cleansing from this canker. Because of what Christ has done on the Cross, the addicted person can retrace his steps back into the waiting arms of God. The addicted person can submit to the authority of God's word and decide to surrender his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. He can begin to walk with a renewed mind that God loves him and wants him to enjoy sex. Sex is a gift from a kind God to him and should never be allowed to become a tyrant ruining his life. He should understand that if he is going to enjoy life in general and sex in particular, he will have to decide to develop a new relationship with God as he reads the Bible and pours out his heart to him in his newfound secret place.

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