

God's Sexual Man: The Vision and the Realization

By: Alan Medinger

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GOD'S SEXUAL MAN

The Vision and the Realization

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INTRODUCTION

This is a book about sexual fulfillment, more specifically, about gaining the freedom to enjoy to its fullest a magnificent gift God has given us, our male sexuality. God gave us our bodies and they are good. He gave us our sexual parts and our drive to experience sexual pleasure in order to bless us. Our sexuality is a core part of who we are as men, intended by our creator to play a major role in His plan for how we should live, a plan whose foundation is rooted in His love for us.

But I hardly need to say that we Christian men don't always feel that our sexuality is a gift, particularly in those too frequent times when our sexual desires would take us places where a part of us knows we should not go. In fact, we Christians often convey to the world—and to each other—that our sexuality is more of a curse than a blessing, that it is primarily something to be stifled, or that maybe it was given us as some kind of test; will we be faithful and obedient or not? The world itself gives us ample evidence of the negative effects of male sexual desires as we become increasingly flooded with pornography, perversion, sexual abuse, single mothers and fatherless children, sexually transmitted disease, AIDS and on and on.

Indeed, there is a negative side to our sexuality; its misuse can have horrendous consequences. This is one reason why God says no to fornication, to adultery, to homosexual behavior. But it is not the only reason. He has ruled these behaviors as being out of bounds for us because He has a far better plan for our sexuality. Our male sexuality is a gift and He wants us to experience it to its fullest. What He has named as sexual sin keeps us from experiencing the full blessings of having been created sexual men. Here, as in all things, His love and His law are totally consistent.

When I set out to write a book that would help the average Christian man deal with his sexuality, I wanted it to be a positive book, not one that looked at sexuality primarily from the perspective of trying to avoid sin. After completing about two-thirds of the first draft I thought I had done a pretty good job of offering a fresh and positive approach to male sexuality. Then my bishop, Phillip Zampino, asked me if I had read Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*. Although not Roman Catholic himself, he thought that this was the best teaching he had ever encountered on sexuality, and he was having all of the clergy in his charge study it together for a year. He gave me a copy of *Theology of the Body Explained*¹, Christopher West's adaptation of the Pope's teaching in book form. (The teachings themselves were given in 129 general audiences that the Pope had offered in the Vatican between 1979 and 1984).

I read *Theology of the Body Explained* and knew I had to start my book all over again. Here was the basis for the positive approach to sexuality for which I had been striving.

¹ Christopher West, *Theology of the Body Explained* (Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 2007).

This book is not a restatement of Theology of the Body teaching. That is not needed; Christopher West has done a magnificent job of interpreting the Pope's teachings in the book just mentioned and in a second book, *Theology of the Body for Beginners*². Rather, this book is a guide to becoming the sexual men God calls us to be, rooted in the great principles put forth in Theology of the Body, namely that our bodies and our sexuality are magnificent gifts from God, and as with other gifts, they fulfill their greatest potential when they are used and expressed in accordance with the plans of the One who designed them.

A SHARING OF GIFTS

This is a book written by an evangelical Christian drawing on the teaching of a Catholic pope. Just as John Paul II expressed a hope that his Theology of the Body teaching would reach all Christians, it is my prayer that the message of this book will resonate in the hearts of Christian men from all traditions. The Pope's teaching was overwhelmingly Biblically based, and I think you will find this book to be the same.

I am going to make a broad generalization here, one for which we can find many exceptions, but one that I believe generally describes the church today. Evangelicals tend to be activists; Roman Catholics tend to be contemplatives. The evangelical world in which I have lived and ministered for more than thirty years has developed a vast number of effective means for taking Gospel truths and helping people apply them to their lives. Through tools of evangelism and through a huge number of specialized para-church ministries, it is able to reach all sorts and conditions of men and women. Regeneration, the ministry I started and led for many years, reached out to those with gender identity issues and to those caught in the grip of addictive sexual sin. Today, in retirement, my wife and I share a house with our son and his family, so our basement houses the Northern Maryland offices of the ministry in which my son serves, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Regeneration and FCA; same Gospel message, but ministering to such different needs. Such is the gift of the evangelical church.

We evangelicals are strong on application, but I believe, not so strong in the contemplative area; that is, taking the clear written Word of God and developing a deep theology which allows us to quickly apply the Word in new situations. Nowhere has this weakness shown up more than in the life and sexuality issues that divide our culture today. There has been a tendency among evangelicals, as among Protestants in general, to drift on issues of life and sexuality. This drift has shown itself in how contraception and marriage and re-marriage are viewed. Many evangelicals are uncertain as to where they stand with respect to embryonic stem cell research and with regards to various means of achieving fertilization other than through sexual intercourse between a husband and wife. The Southern Baptist Convention hailed Roe vs. Wade, the Supreme Court decision making abortion legal throughout the country, as a good thing when it was first handed down. I believe this great evangelical body did this because they lacked a deep and clear theology of life. Blessedly, at their convention in 2003, the Baptists had the

² *Theology of the Body for Beginners: A Basic Introduction to John Paul II's Revolution* (West Chester, PA, Ascension Press, 2004) 0.

wisdom, grace and humility to publicly repent of this action using the words “lament and denounce” with respect to their earlier statements.

Evangelicals have developed a gift of saying and demonstrating, “Here is what the Bible says, and here is how you can apply it to your life”. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, have developed the gift of saying and demonstrating, “Here is what the Bible says, and here are the deeper truths that we can discern from God’s word, truths that will guide you in all circumstances of your life”. We each need some of the other’s gifts.

In the 1970’s the Catholic Church in then Communist Poland was experiencing a great revival among its young people, something that was a new experience for many church leaders. Cardinal Karol Wojtyla , Archbishop of Krakow, the future Pope John Paul II, was deeply involved with these young people and was well aware of the spiritual hunger they were experiencing. He looked for help, help that would make solid and lasting the budding faith of these Polish youth. The Cardinal found the help he needed—in Campus Crusade for Christ in the USA. The future Pope and Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright formed a partnership which had Crusade sending as many as thirty staff members at a time to Poland to work with the Catholic youth. A retreat manual was prepared for the young Polish Catholics based on Campus Crusade’s *Ten Basic Steps Towards Christian Maturity*.³

The future Pope had the courage, the wisdom and the humility to seek from another part of the Body of Christ the gifts that his church needed at that time. It is my prayer that the evangelical readers of this book will similarly be willing to draw from the gifts of John Paul II, and that Catholic readers will find in this book gifts formed through the experiences of this evangelical author.

Pope John Paul II himself said that our ecumenical efforts through dialogue and through trying to reach doctrinal agreements have probably exhausted themselves, but that through “an exchange of gifts” we could head in the direction of the unity Christ desires for the church⁴. Indeed, an appreciation for the special gifts that Christians from other traditions have, can not only enrich our lives, but should appreciation lead to acceptance and acceptance to love, who knows where this could lead us. I pray that this book will help foster such an exchange.

A BOOK FOR ALL MEN

A few readers may know of my background and of the focus of Regeneration, the ministry I led for many years. Regeneration’s primary calling is to minister change and healing to men and women caught up in sex addiction and those who find themselves with unwanted same-sex attractions—homosexuality. My own background involved same-sex attraction and sex addiction. This book, however, is not targeted at these two

³ This story was reported in *Christianity Today*, May, 2005 in an article, “The Pope We Never Knew” by David Scott. As another ecumenical note, this article also reports that on the first day of John Paul’s papacy in Rome, the man who was preaching at his cathedral back in Krakow, Poland was Billy Graham.

⁴ Quoted in *First Things*, December, 2007, in an article “Saving Ecumenism from Itself” by Avery Cardinal Dulles.

groups, but rather, is for all men who struggle with sexual lust or who otherwise sense that they are not the sexual men God calls them to be.

Same-sex attracted and sexually addicted men can gain much from this book. However both groups usually need more than this book offers. Same-sex attracted men generally also need help with identity issues⁵, and sexually addicted men usually need fairly intensive programs, usually involving group support. But these men, like all others, if they can gain a vision for who God would have them be as sexual men, and if they can find some degree of hope for becoming that man, healing and change will much more likely occur. The specific illustrations I use to describe men's struggles and victories are all heterosexual, but in most cases same-sex attracted men can meaningfully transfer the situations into homosexual ones.

PERSONAL NOTES

Finally, a few personal comments. I am one of those rare and blessed individuals who found freedom from sex addiction and homosexuality at the point of conversion more than 30 years ago. The night I said to God, "I give up", the night I became a new creature in Christ, I was both set free from my addiction and I fell in love with my wife and desired her, and her alone, sexually. (I always need to mention that in my many years of ministry, I have found such sudden healing to be an extremely rare occurrence). But in many of the years following that night in 1974, I have had to walk the walk of most Christian men. I have had to deal with struggles with lust. I mention this so that the reader doesn't assume I write from the perspective of theory alone.

The book will not dwell on my personal journey, but where my story is relevant, I promise complete openness and honesty. I don't like "telling all" because I am sure some of my children and grandchildren will read the book, but my experience in ministry, in the church, and in reading Christian books on sexuality is that few men are willing to be totally transparent. What is shared, even by authors and pastors, is too often only a part of the truth. It is frequently shaded "to protect the wife and children or the congregation", and sometimes it is simply untrue. This creates a situation where many Christian men have little sense of the reality of living as a sexual men seeking to follow Christ. Many live with unrealistic expectations, others with unwarranted shame.

Our sexuality is generally a private and personal matter. It should be. Modesty and intimacy with our wives, and respect for women in general, require this. But for a man to keep areas of sexual sin from everyone, or for an author of a book like this to hide certain sins and struggles is to embrace the darkness. Jesus calls us into the light, for it is in the light that we can experience that great gift of our male sexuality.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

The first five chapters focus on the gifts that God has given us in our bodies, our sexuality and our manhood, and they lay the groundwork for forming a vision for the sexual man God would have us be. The next eight chapters deal with those obstacles

⁵ My earlier book, *Growth Into Manhood: Resuming the Journey*, (Colorado Springs, Co, Waterbrook Press, 2000) is such a book.

men face in becoming that man. These are the “sin” chapters, and I wish they didn’t take up so much of the book but then, I wish that sexual sin weren’t such a stumbling block for so many men. The final chapters deal more specifically with who it is we are becoming, most of us as married men, some as single, and they explore some of the deeper spiritual significance of our sexuality.

Throughout the book, I will try to keep alive the vision and the conscious realization that we are on a journey towards fulfillment of the vision. And too, I will encourage the reader to have hope for his own fulfillment of the vision. Even after years of dealing with truly hard cases, I firmly believe that every man has great reason for hope in this area.

There are discussion questions at the end of each chapter. They can be used by men who are studying the book as a group, or by individuals to guide them on to further thought and prayer. For individuals, I highly recommend that you journal as you prayerfully consider the questions. The one assignment I give every man (in Chapter 5) is to write out his own vision for the sexual man he believes God would have him be. I can’t urge you too much to do this. I believe that writing out the vision will multiply many times whatever rewards you gain from reading the book.

Finally, I have a rather unusual suggestion to make. If you are a married man, don’t encourage your wife to read this book—at least while you are reading it. My reasons for suggesting this are found in Appendix A, A Message for Wives.

God bless you on your journey. May you find it to be one of the great adventures of your life. And ultimately may you become the sexual man God created you to be, bringing great blessings, not just to you, but especially to your wife and your children (present or future).