

## **Sexual Integrity – session 7**

### **Twelve thoughts on relationships**

1. You were created to be a social being.

"God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27)

2. We all tend to enter our relationships with unrealistic expectations.

"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-3)

3. We all tend to seek to get identity from our relationships.

Read Colossians 3:12-17

4. We tend to be disappointed in our relationships because they were more about the purposes of our little kingdoms of self than they were about the kingdom of God.

Read John 13

5. Stop using pornography and sexual fantasy to replace your relational needs.

Pornography and relationships

- Pornography divorces sexuality from any kind of genuine relationship
- Through your mental rehearsal of non-relational sex, you are narcissistically becoming more the object of your own love that leaves less and less room for anyone else
- Pornography trains the person who engages in it to live in his head in a narcissistic world of gratification
- Pornography often becomes a means of dealing with the strain of relational conflict, but makes you less able to manage it
- Pornography keeps a person in a state of adolescent selfishness, rendering them incapable of adult relating or sexual functioning.
- People who engage in pornography tend to become isolated
- For people involved in pornography, it becomes the primary relationship in life.
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6. Seek God and His kingdom first. Relational intimacy is the by-product of getting first things first.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

7. Make and plan time in your life for relationship with others.

"Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:1-4)

8. Be intentional with time together

- Intentional is not agenda, which is usually focused on what I expect you to do, often to make things easier for me
- Intentional is where you have decided to relate deeply, emotionally, sacrificially, for the good of another person, and you decide not to allow trivialities distract from that focus
- Intentional is where you understand the power of words.

Read James 3:3-10

Proverbs 12:18 - "There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Proverbs 15:4 - "A soothing tongue is a tree of life, But perversion in it crushes the spirit."

9. Be transparent in your relationships

10. Enter in to the world of the other person.

11. Focus conversation on specific areas where you can involve God in the life of the other person. In a short article called "Redeeming Relationship in an Empty Marriage" David Powlison suggests three types of questions that engage your spouse:

- What are your burdens and troubles?
- What are your joys and what are you grateful for?
- What are your aspirations and purpose?

12. Don't overlook the emotional component of relationships.

Read Ephesians 4:32 and 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8