



harvestusa

2021 MAGAZINE

STANDING FIRM
For His Glory

NEW FROM HARVEST USA!

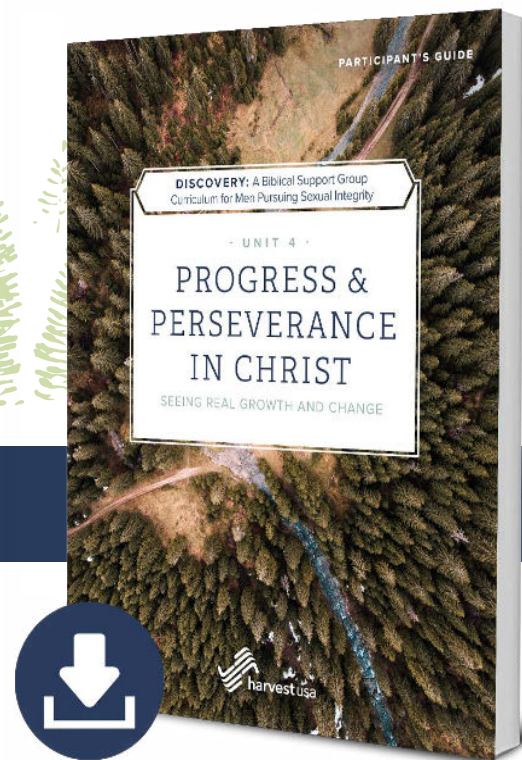
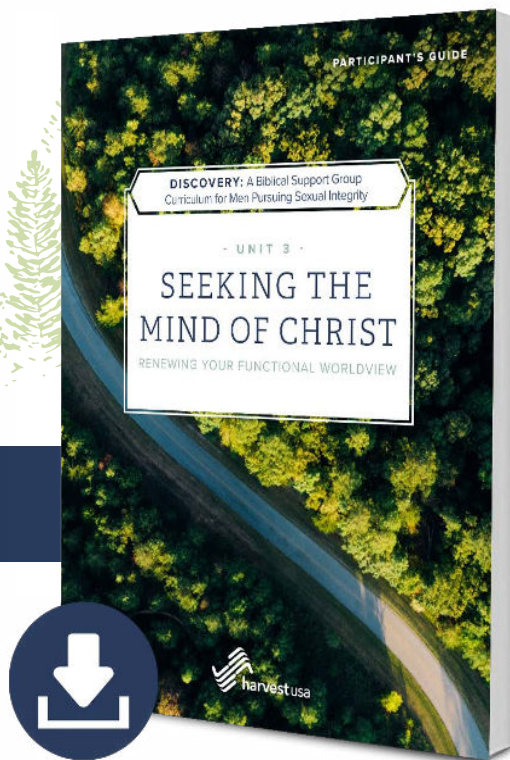


DISCOVERY: A BIBLICAL SUPPORT GROUP CURRICULUM FOR MEN PURSUING SEXUAL INTEGRITY

- Four-unit series (13 lessons each) guides men through a course of Bible study to draw out how the gospel transforms their life experiences, desires, beliefs, and behaviors
- A Participant's Guide and Leader's Guide is available as a free digital download for each unit
- Makes Harvest USA's discipleship model accessible to the local church
- Designed for use in small groups



NEW FROM HARVEST USA!



"I love this curriculum and will recommend it often. Both unique and practical, this resource is honest about the nature of sin. By rooting change in our new identity in Christ, it is a wonderful gospel tool that addresses both personal and cultural struggles."



— **PAUL DAVID TRIPP**
Author, *New Morning Mercies*,
How People Change, and *Sex
in a Broken World*

CONTENTS



FEATURES

- 01** From the Founder
JOHN FREEMAN
- 03** Promotion Announcements
MARK SANDERS AND JIM WEIDENAAR
- 04** How My Church Helps Sexual Strugglers (and Yours Can Too)
ANONYMOUS
- 09** What Should You Look for in a Local Church?
MARK SANDERS
- 14** Understanding Sexual Sin: The Harvest USA Tree Model
JIM WEIDENAAR
- 18** Same-Sex Attraction, Sin, and Redemption: A Church Leader's Story
ANONYMOUS
- 22** Meet the Staff
JEFFREY MINNIS
- 23** An Interview on Sexual Faithfulness
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MISSION STATEMENT

Harvest USA brings the truth and mercy of Jesus Christ by:

- Helping individuals and families affected by sexual struggles
- Providing resources that address biblical sexuality to individuals and churches

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FROM THE FOUNDER

The Importance of the Local Church

The local church. An increasing number of people, even believers, say, “Who needs it? Is it even relevant anymore?” The answer is clear: You and I both do. All followers of Jesus need the local church!

Recently, I was talking with an elder in a local Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) congregation. As a graying baby boomer, he was aghast when some of the 30-something-year-old elders at his own church suggested that, just maybe, the institution of the local church was no longer necessary. Not unlike other congregations, this past year’s online streaming of sermons and home groups created by the COVID-19 pandemic has become the essence of his own church, replacing corporate worship—and bringing into question whether or not all the upkeep required to maintain a brick-and-mortar facility was still justified. Wow!

At Harvest USA, we believe strongly that the local church has been, and always will be, God’s primary vehicle for personal growth, maturity, and service to others. Not only does God command us to gather for corporate worship, but a local church is also the place where we formally join, pledging before others to support its work and to care for one another, both spiritually and practically. It’s where we as believers gather regularly to uphold those precious, God-ordained sacraments of baptism and communion. And, when it comes time to exchange their own marriage vows, even the most “woke” millennials still find their way back to walk down a traditional church aisle where their intended spouses await them at the traditional church altar.

For us as believers, Church is where all the one-anotherings of life-on-life ministry, as laid out in the Scriptures, happen and where spiritual caretaking and loving correction occur for those who are in unrepentant sin and doctrinal error. When it works well, the local church is where we see God’s glory shine among us corporately, as well as individually.

That’s why here at Harvest USA, we remain committed to the local church model! We view ourselves as a ministry coming alongside local congregations in areas where church leaders may find themselves deficient or overwhelmed by pressing issues that vie for their attention. It’s been our experience that ministry to sexual strugglers and those scarred by their sexual backgrounds can easily be overlooked or put on the back burner. Sometimes, churches do this out of fear of the unknown, and sometimes out of feeling incapable of knowing how to address these issues. That’s a huge mistake.

Forty years ago, I remember Dr. Harvey Conn, my missions professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, telling his class that those who carried the scars of their sexual histories were one of the greatest segments of “hidden peoples” in the Church. And that was back in 1982! Can you imagine, with the sexually charged, internet-absorbed culture we live in today, just how much that has mushroomed?!

Unfortunately, church leaders are no more exempt from this culture of sexual sin than anyone else. According to the Barna Group, most pastors (57%) and youth pastors (64%) admit to their own struggles with porn, either

currently or in the past.¹ Like the rest of us, it's just a keystroke away!

That's why we see our mission here at Harvest USA as coming alongside the local church, providing support for its long-term health and viability. In my book, *Hide or Seek: When Men Get Real About Sex with God*, I talk about the negative impact of unresolved sexual struggles and how the reality of a neglected heart impacts not only individuals but also families and the Church as a whole. Failing to encourage people to redemptively address their sexual histories and current struggles will severely cripple the work of the Church. Imagine how the effectiveness of the Church could advance if people were freed up from their besetting sins in this area.

Harvest USA wants to equip churches to do this—by helping people shake off the bonds of sin so that they can best use their gifts for building up the local church, to the glory of God. What church wouldn't want its people to experience this? We stand ready to assist local churches in this kind of restorative and redemptive ministry!

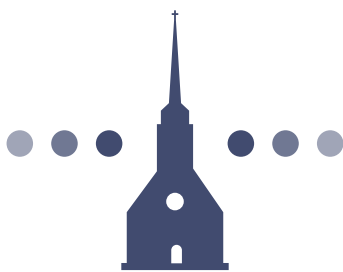
If you have any thoughts or experiences you'd like to share in this area of church leadership, I'd love to hear from you!

John Freeman

FOUNDER



JOHN FREEMAN is the Founder at Harvest USA. His calling is to see those who struggle with pornography, homosexuality, and other sexual addictions experience changed lives through Jesus Christ.



¹ *The Porn Phenomenon: The Impact of Pornography in the Digital Age*. The Barna Group, April 2016, pp. 81.

Sign of the Times: Key Metrics of Faith

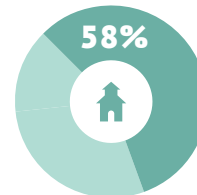


1 in 4 Americans (25%) is a **practicing Christian**.

Note: The title “practicing Christian” takes into account three variables: calling oneself a Christian, strongly prioritizing faith, and regular church attendance.¹



Approximately **3 out of 10 adults attend church weekly**. Monthly, committed churchgoers are now about **half as common** as they were two decades ago.¹



Over half of both **practicing Christians (65%)** and **churchgoers (58%)** say that, at least “most of the time,” they leave worship services feeling as if it was **the most important experience they had all week**.²



Just under **7 in 10 Americans (69%)** affirm they **pray weekly**.¹



1. The Barna Group, “Signs of Decline & Hope Among Key Metrics of Faith”

2. The Barna Group, “Encouraged, Disappointed, Connected—How Churchgoers Feel After Worship”

PROMOTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Harvest USA is pleased to announce several recent promotions.



MARK SANDERS

Mark Sanders has been promoted to the position of Director of Discipleship. In his new role, Mark is overseeing all of our direct ministry at Harvest USA, which includes supervising and training all direct ministry staff, and managing the internship program. Mark also continues to provide direct ministry to men who struggle sexually, facilitate biblical support groups for men, produce video resources, write, and teach.

Mark joined the Harvest USA staff in 2015 after completing internships with Harvest USA and CCEF (Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation). He holds an MA in counseling from Westminster Theological Seminary.

Mark has a passion for coming alongside believers to encourage them, pray for them, and remind them of Christ's heart for sinners. If you would like to support Mark's ministry at Harvest, please visit harvestusa.org/donate.



JIM WEIDENAAR

Jim Weidenaar has been promoted to the position of Director of Church Equipping. In his new role, Jim is overseeing all of our initiatives to equip the Church, which includes resource production, in-person teaching events, and other web-based teaching. Jim continues to oversee Harvest USA's Pittsburgh office, provide direct ministry to men who struggle sexually and to parents whose children identify as LGBTQ+, write, and teach.

Jim has been on staff at Harvest USA since 2012, and he has gained valuable experience in equipping local churches to minister to sexual strugglers through Harvest USA's Partner Ministry program. Jim is an ordained teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and holds a PhD in historical and theological studies from Westminster Theological Seminary.

Jim has a passion to equip local churches to be places of hope and help for sexual strugglers. If you would like to support Jim's ministry at Harvest USA, please visit harvestusa.org/donate.





How My Church Helps Sexual Strugglers

(and Yours Can Too)



BY ANONYMOUS

Does our denomination have a book on sex?" she asked me.

It was an honest enough question. And it became the starting point for what was to come.

I had originally met this young lady in 2008 in a Sunday school class that I was teaching. Her serious demeanor and sharp mind quickly impressed me. Now she was seeking personal help.

Her question set me on my heels. Frankly, I did not even know whether such a book existed. Aspects of sexual brokenness in my immediate family had already honed my own interest in seeking biblical answers, but this young lady deserved a ready response, and I knew I was unprepared.

GETTING STARTED

My thoughts spun backward to three years earlier. My own twenty-something son, Austin, and I had gone out for a pleasant dinner one evening. As he dropped me off at home, instead of saying goodbye, he hesitantly announced that he needed to share something with me. He told me he was gay and handed me an envelope of materials selected to help me "understand." Quickly, he added, "Mom, you'll get used to it." I fumbled for coherent words and finally said, "Austin, I'll always love you." Little did he know that I was also pledging to myself, "He may think I will get used to it, but I never will!"

Both my mind and heart reeled after my son's disclosure. Only after three months had passed was I able to share the details with my closest friend. As God would have it, during those three months, my church also sponsored a Saturday-morning presentation by two Harvest USA staff members. Though the event had been announced in the church bulletin for several weeks, I decided not to attend. It just seemed too messy and raw of a topic for me to wrestle with, even though, as a teacher in a Christian school, I knew that a number of my students struggled with sexual issues. But now I had a personal reason to attend the presentation. Now there was no question that I needed a defined, biblical perspective that could benefit both my son and me.

This new terrain that God was calling me to navigate was not altogether unfamiliar. My former husband's lifelong pornography involvement had undermined our marriage, our family relationships, and his pastoral ministry. Trusting God in the midst of close sexual brokenness was an undeniable part of His plan for me. With the addition of Austin's situation, I now had to ask myself, "Would I ignore my pain and His plan, or would I use both for His glory?"

Not only did my son's unexpected announcement rock my heart, but it also soon divided the world we had shared. It was easy to see that he was working to justify his choices, looking for ways to distance himself not only from me but also from his Creator. His connection to any church had been nonexistent for years, but now he joined an "accepting" church. Soon after, he moved out of town and connected with the man who would become his partner.

A new and sobering question became a regular part of my thinking: "Do I love my son enough to resist the seemingly easier path of accepting his self-identity?" Accepting his identity would, on my part, encourage something that the Lord says would actually be destructive to him. Even at the start of this journey, I realized that the correct path ahead would quite possibly be the greatest and most costly challenge of my life; however, my son was worth it. Wasn't that exactly the example set by Christ in the way that He loved us?

I knew Austin was aware of Scripture's stance. I also took comfort in the fact that he had been raised with sound, biblical training and the strong influence of Christian mentors who were used by the Holy Spirit to pour truth into his heart.



A new and sobering question became a regular part of my thinking: "Do I love my son enough to resist the seemingly easier path of accepting his self-identity?"



I found comfort and resolution in recognizing that the core issue was not my son’s relationship with me or even his lifestyle choices; rather, his core issue was his personal relationship with his Creator and with Truth.

Reassured by what God had already put in place in Austin’s life, I personally focused on framing a compassionate, biblical response toward him. Parental instincts urged me toward using human “rescue” methods that seemed logical or promised to be permanently effective. Instead, I found comfort and resolution in recognizing that the core issue was not my son’s relationship with me or even his lifestyle choices; rather, his core issue was his personal relationship with his Creator and with Truth.

I never pushed, argued, or preached. Instead, I assured him of my love, availability, and prayers, reminding him that he had the freedom to fashion his side of our relationship as he wished.

Should I have done more? I realized up front that I was opting for a journey with length and details that would be left up to the working of the Holy Spirit—not necessarily according to my timetable and perhaps with an itinerary that might never become predictable or clear, even in hindsight. However, I wanted Austin to be dealt with by the One who loved and knew him best. Prayerful faithfulness, quiet love, compassion, an increasing grasp of the real issues, and—oh, yes!—exhausting patience became my assignments from God.

For Austin’s part, anything short of my complete acceptance and approval was unacceptable. Soon, he cut off all contact—a painful scenario that lasted for nearly ten years.

GETTING ORGANIZED

Meanwhile, my church offered me a staff position that allowed me to participate in structuring our adult ministries. Personally, I was determined that we should biblically engage with any cultural issue, sexual issues included—a perspective that was fully endorsed, supported, and practiced by the pastoral leadership. Together, we proactively applied biblical teaching to cultural shifts by participating in discussions and teaching opportunities that addressed homosexuality, pornography, and domestic abuse.

Certainly, the Body of Christ is never left untouched by the culture outside the Church. As we took initiative on these issues, we found many in our congregation who were both grateful and ready to learn and minister. Together, the secular culture around us and the Body of Christ inside the Church proved to be willing participants wanting solid answers. Other local churches were soon represented among those who responded to

the training, informational, and support resources we offered.

The fledgling ministry grew as we focused on training witnesses and workers and began to structure outreach and activities. I attended Harvest USA training sessions on how to present their materials. Based upon known needs within our own congregation, we also hosted Harvest USA seminars, such as *Shattered Dreams*, *New Hope* and *Raising Sexually Healthy Kids*. Men's integrity groups were established to offer support, instruction, and accountability. We introduced a support group for women whose marriages were being affected by pornography, and we established two support groups for parents of gay and transgender children. We also devoted several adult Sunday school series lasting three months each to educating church members on current sexual issues, such as homosexuality and biblical gender roles. This summer, we also incorporated Harvest USA teaching videos. All of these opportunities are open to our congregation and non-members alike. Relevant printed materials are readily available at our literature rack. My involvement in our church's counseling ministry, primarily to church members, has become a useful link as well.

GETTING REAL

In our metropolitan area within the last fifteen years, we have built an identity as a church that ministers seriously, biblically, and openly to those affected by sexual struggles. Not only are we able to serve our own church membership, but we've also become a resource hub—and perhaps a point of hope—to area churches that lack the time, resources, or simply personnel to initiate what we have to offer. Surely it was a given that, just as my puppy runs to her food bowl, believers and churches would seek out and support these solid and badly needed resources...

Not so!

Not everyone applauded, or even wanted to take advantage of, what we'd prepared. I encountered believers who simply weren't going to "go there," and the same was even true of several area churches that were known for their gospel-driven approach. One pastor did not want to risk "offending the senior saints" by having Harvest USA do a seminar at his church. Some felt that they must mute or modify the truth, even though they claimed to care for their strugglers.

Surprised, but more saddened than anything else, I realized that my own thinking needed re-orientation—not my adherence to biblical sexuality, but my personal assumptions concerning the readiness of the Body of

Christ to face several root questions:

1. Does the pressure of cultural norms weigh more heavily on us than the authority of Scripture?
2. Are we and our churches ready for a future that will likely put us at odds with others, including our legal authorities?
3. Are we willing to educate ourselves on some unpleasant, even politically incorrect, subjects in order to adopt a compassionate, biblically oriented approach to our everyday world?
4. Are we willing to cultivate and prioritize serious habits of prayer and personal availability in relationships ordained by God that we might otherwise not have chosen?

When these questions are addressed head-on, the answers will almost certainly produce an unavoidable, often unforeseen, reality check. Sooner or later, regardless of our position in the local church and whether or not we experience a personal crisis, today's culture will confront almost every believer with its sexual trends and questions. On some level, each of us will be called upon to respond to current sexual deceptions;



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quiet love, compassion,
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from God.



such is the function of Light in the darkness. Even if we can anticipate what is coming, few of us are prepared to give a godly response. Especially for those of us in church ministry, such a journey is usually uphill and costly in some way. The temptation to soft-pedal what Scripture teaches may well be overwhelming at times. But, with eternity in mind, that is never a viable option.

GETTING PERSONAL

Clearly, the sexual issues of today constitute a significant watershed test for the Body of Christ. Instead of backing off or wringing my hands, I have begun to value my own family's experiences with sexual brokenness as a tool used by God to motivate me to persevere. Essentially, it's an ongoing, personal process—begun in my own heart, independent of what my local church has in place. I personally must:

1. Cultivate my own pursuit of Scripture, along with my relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Practice a serious pursuit of prayer.
3. View sexual strugglers through the eyes of my Savior.
4. Seek God's direction for when and how to minister.
5. Remember that His truth is unchanging and is *always* Light.

Whether or not the Church is in crisis today is a common question. The wiser question is whether or not the Church will be willing to take the steps needed to meet the individual and collective crises of those around us.

Not every believer's path or motivations will exactly mirror mine, but all believers have an obligation to know truth, to obey it, and to share it. We never know His timetable, and, often, we do not see His work. But we are assured of the goodness of those "wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure" (Isaiah 25:1). May He find us equally faithful.

In this article, we do not disclose our author's real name because she has requested to remain anonymous.



I have begun to value my own family's experiences with sexual brokenness as a tool used by God to motivate me to persevere.



What Should You Look for in a Local Church?



BY MARK SANDERS

There are no two ways about it: Harvest USA is a unique place. The topics of discussion, the raw honesty of sharing, and the incredible sense of safety are not always what people experience walking into their local churches. Many ministry recipients who receive meaningful support here at Harvest USA find themselves questioning why they weren't able to get this same kind of help in their home churches.

On one level, it is an indictment that so many men and women in our churches are struggling with sexual sin in darkness and isolation. But is the solution to simply abandon all decorum and propriety and become a community that “keeps it real” at all costs? Should the narthex or foyer after the service become a place of impromptu support groups and raw-honesty discipleship?

Of course not! First and foremost, the Church exists for the worship of our triune God. God primarily calls us to gather every Sunday, not to overshare our sexual sin with one another but to worship Him in spirit and truth. While corporate confession of sin and assurance of pardon are wonderful aspects of a worship service, they should not include open-mic time so that each congregant can proclaim details of last week's failures.

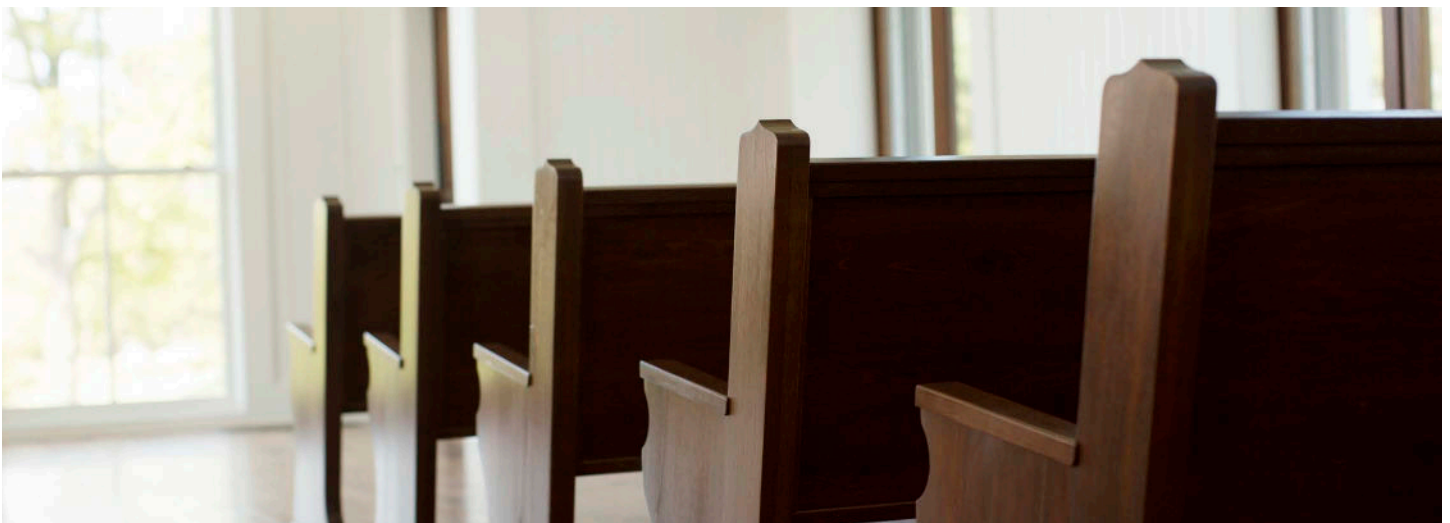
However, this does not mean that the Church has zero responsibility for wisely disciplining its members in such

a crucial, spiritual battlefield as sexual purity. While the value of the ordinary means of grace that we experience each Sunday as we gather for corporate worship is incalculable, struggles, especially of a sexual nature, require churches to take a proactive, intentional, and personal approach with their congregations.

So, what should you look for in a local church when it comes to its approach on these matters? While many significant criteria can be applied to evaluate the health and faithfulness of a local church, I would like to submit that the manner in which church leadership addresses matters of sexual sin and redemption is in itself a litmus test for their commitment to making disciples, and not just converts, of all nations.

Failing to address sexual brokenness in the local church is akin to failing to floss for oral health. We might think that simply brushing your teeth is enough to remove all plaque and food particles, but, hidden between the crevices, bacteria still remain; when left to fester without flossing, we're told that even one's heart health can be jeopardized. The same can be said for discipleship in sexual integrity: failure to address sexual sin compromises every aspect of discipleship.

Far too many Christians assume that sexual sin is something that can't possibly pervade our churches' sacred walls, but that is an assumption that the Bible,



While the value of the ordinary means of grace that we experience each Sunday as we gather for corporate worship is incalculable, struggles, especially of a sexual nature, require the Church to take a more proactive, intentional, and personal approach with its people.

and particularly the Apostle Paul, rejects. If you read through Paul's letters, you will find that it's the exception for Paul not to address issues of sexual immorality. It seems to be his most commonly addressed pastoral issue, and that's not because he just arbitrarily picked sexual sin out of a hat. He wrote about it so frequently because he faced it so often in his own pastoral ministry. Paul assumes that the Church is the God-ordained context for our growth in sexual sanctification. So, if that's true and you are looking to join a local church, you should be asking questions about their approach to sexual sin. To help you get started, here are five things to consider.

1. DOES THE PREACHING REFLECT PAUL'S WRITING?

Does your pastor only talk about sexual sin if the Scripture passage he is preaching from directly addresses it? If so, then you could go months, perhaps years, in certain books of the Bible and never hear anything from the pulpit on sexual sin. This does not mean pastors should not preach expository sermons, but the application of general gospel principles should extend to the real issues facing the people in the pews, which are often sexual in nature. Silence on sexuality can lead many congregants who wrestle with shame and guilt to feel isolated and unseen. They may feel as though their pastor doesn't recognize how broken and ensnared they are. Every single Sunday morning, a pastor should assume he has people in his congregation who sinned sexually the night before, as well as others wracked with guilt over sexual sins they committed decades ago.

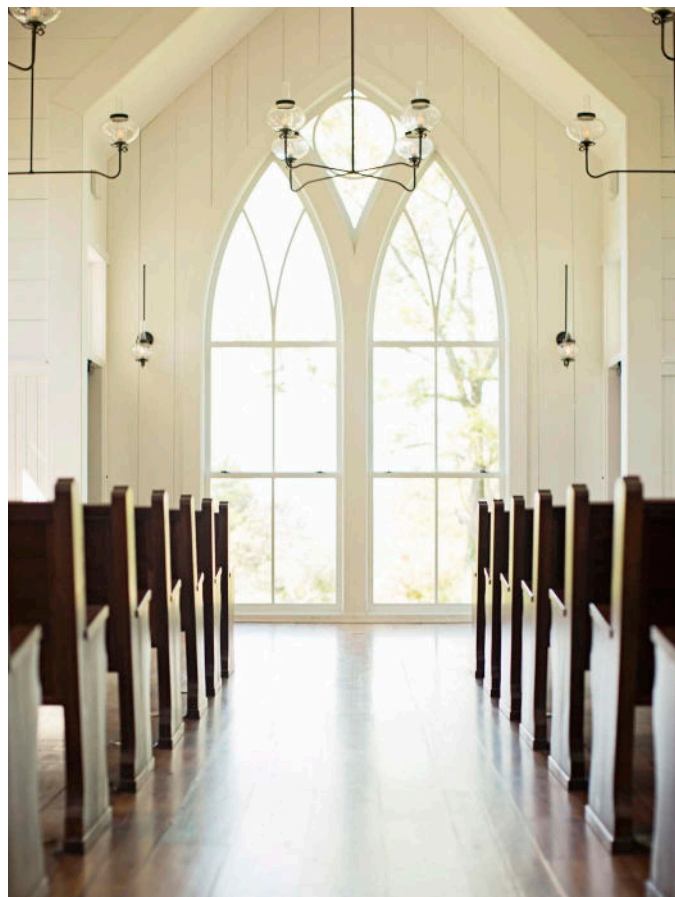
Many of us have already known the supernatural experience of having our pastor speak directly to us, as if we are the only person in the room. That's actually not your pastor; it's the Holy Spirit. Pastors should assume that the Spirit will use our acknowledgement of these issues to regularly pierce hearts, bring conviction, and assure the despairing that there is still hope in our risen Savior. Paul spoke so frequently about sexual sin because he needed to, and that need is all the more apparent 2,000 years later.

2. IS THERE A PROACTIVE MINISTRY FOR REPENTANCE OF SEXUAL SIN?

If your pastor preaches about sexual sin frequently, my guess is that he has felt overwhelmed by the number of people coming to him for help. In our current milieu, it's hard to imagine that a pastor has never discipled a young man enslaved by pornography. Most pastors can handle that, if it's just one sexual struggler.

But what if *half* the men in your church are struggling

Paul assumes that the Church is the God-ordained context for our growth in sexual sanctification.



with pornography, and their wives are also suffering? Additionally, an unacknowledged but significant number of women are wrestling firsthand with sexual sin, and a growing population of parents have children who are taking on LGBTQ+ identities at unprecedented rates. Can one pastor be expected to disciple all of them individually?

If your church leadership wants every member to be a sexually faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, they need help from others. Your church leadership should focus significant energy on raising up men and women who will take up this call to minister to the sexual strugglers in your midst. We have a truncated concept of the Great Commission if we have a dedicated outreach ministry to the lost, but nothing for sexual discipleship. Peter said very clearly that judgment "begins at the household of God" (1 Peter 4:17). This is why Harvest USA exists, to equip you as the Church to do redemptive ministry in the areas of sexual sin. Let us help you do that!

Perhaps the Lord will be pleased to use your initiative as the catalyst for a new wave of discipleship, repentance, and redemption for many.



3. IS YOUR CHURCH LED BY TRUSTWORTHY ELDERS?

With deep sorrow, we hear stories of pastoral malpractice in the Church. Sometimes, we feel trepidation at recommending that the men and women who come to Harvest USA reach out to their church leaders, because we have seen that even elders and pastors can respond in ways that are inconsistent with the gospel. Thankfully, I hear many more stories of faithful, loving, wise, and tender-hearted leaders in the Church!

So ask yourself if the shepherds of your local church are men of integrity. Do they hold up to the biblical standards set out for them in Titus and 1 Timothy? True, no elder is perfect, and sometimes a personality may rub you the wrong way, but, by God's grace, can you say that your elders are seeking to be humble, compassionate, submissive to God's Word, proactive, and truly desire good for those under their care?

4. ARE FREQUENT INVITATIONS MADE TO COME INTO THE LIGHT?

You should look for a local church that assumes that people are struggling, and, as a result, the church is constantly inviting people to reach out for help. It should feel normal in your church to seek help for the ways

you struggle. How does a church cultivate that kind of environment? It does this by frequently acknowledging every believer's ongoing battle with sin and brokenness.

From their pulpits, pastors need to invite all people to seek help with compassion and urgency, with love and sincerity. The invitations should come from many sources. You should find them on your church's website, in the bulletin, during the announcements, and in personal conversations with others.

A former colleague who is now a pastor invites men and women to get help for sexual struggles during their new members' class. If every church did something as simple and proactive as that, how many more people would come out of the shadows and into the light?

5. ULTIMATELY, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING INITIATIVE!

Finally, whether or not your church is taking all of these steps faithfully, the ultimate responsibility to fight against sin falls on you. Come Judgment Day, not one of us will be able to blame the Church's lack of engagement for his or her own sin. So, whether your church addresses this regularly or never, it is still *your* responsibility to get help. Especially if you are in a church that is largely silent on these issues, perhaps the Lord will be pleased to use your initiative as the catalyst for a new wave of discipleship, repentance, and redemption for many others in your midst.

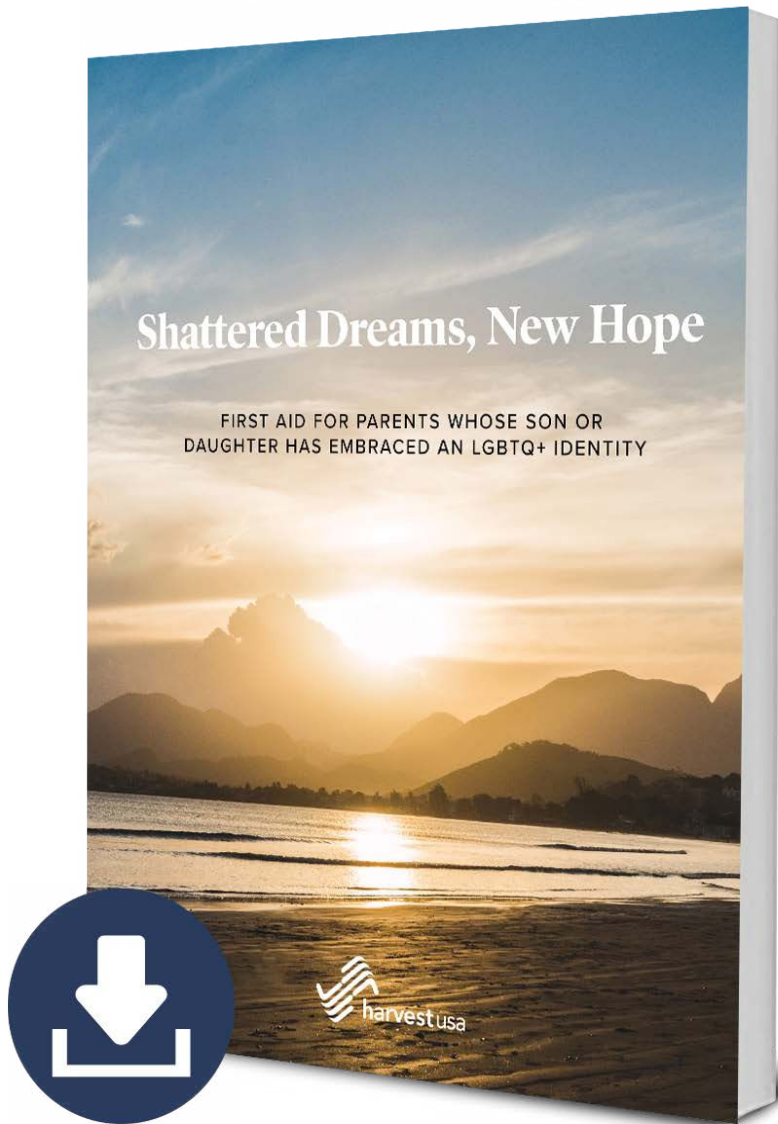
If your church has no desire to disciple its people in matters of sexuality, this should be a warning sign. By God's grace, I believe that Jesus is growing His Church in these areas more and more. No church is perfect, and you need to prayerfully and patiently wade through these matters to discern how Jesus is calling you to respond. My hope is that many of you will take up the challenge to lovingly encourage your leaders to courageously and faithfully disciple their people.



MARK SANDERS is the Director of Discipleship at Harvest USA. He has a passion for coming alongside believers to encourage them, pray for them, and remind them of Christ's heart for sinners.



Shattered Dreams, New Hope



- Available as a **free digital download**
- Designed to provide help and hope to Christian parents whose child identifies as LGBTQ+ and does not desire to live in accordance with God's Word
- Questions are included, suitable for both personal reflection and guiding group discussion

"If you are a parent of a child who identifies as LGBTQ+, this gospel-centric curriculum will encourage, equip, and empower you to be an ambassador for Christ as you point your prodigal to the only One who redeems and offers life in abundance!"



— **CHRISTOPHER YUAN**
International Speaker and Author
of *Out of a Far Country*

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL SIN:

But isn't it just a lust problem?" I was explaining to Mike the Harvest USA Tree Model, the core content of our ministry to both individuals and churches. Mike wanted to believe what I was saying about the deeper aspects of his sin. It gave him hope that there was a path to victory in his fight against the porn habit he'd been losing for years, because willpower certainly hadn't worked. His objection revealed a problem that most of us encounter when thinking about our sin.

Mike's question forces us to seek a more complete understanding of sin. We tend to think of sin in simple ways that only scratch the surface: I'm tempted; I fall; I repeat. But a biblical view of sin goes much deeper. This is what our Harvest USA Tree Model illustrates.

Jesus describes sin as having a source deep within us, in the heart, the epicenter where our intellect, will, and affections all converge. In Matthew 15:18–19, Jesus said, "But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander." Thinking of our hearts as part of a tree originates from Jesus' words in Luke 6:43–45: "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." Building upon these verses, our Tree Model pictures the heart as the source of a tree, the seed.

THE SEED: OUR HEARTS

The most basic characteristic of the seed, or heart, is that it is fallen. The word "autonomy" summarizes the sinful inclination of our hearts. We desire self-rule rather than being ruled by the authority and care of God. Our desire for autonomous independence from God affects every aspect of our lives. It shapes our reactions to our circumstances and experiences; it skews our deepest desires; it taints our functional worldviews. These are the inner workings of sin that bear fruit in what we do. The following three make up the other elements of the tree: the soil, the roots, and the trunk.

THE SOIL: OUR CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXPERIENCES

The soil is the context for the seed. The parents to whom we were born, our families, and our peers are all part of the soil. It is all the things those people do to us or for us—or neglect to do. It is everything that happens to us, good or bad. We are praised, abused, affirmed, attacked, protected, or wounded. We experience trauma and suffering, or we live in shelter and safety. Together, these experiences comprise the context in which our fallen hearts are active.

It is important to note that the soil is *influential* but not *determinative*. The influence of experience and context can be profound and must be taken into account if we want to understand and turn from entrenched sin patterns, but our



THE HARVEST USA TREE MODEL

circumstances do not determine our actions. Our fallen hearts are always interacting with the soil, interpreting and responding to both positive and negative experiences.

THE ROOTS: OUR DEEPEST DESIRES

One of the ways in which our hearts interact with our contexts is by desire. We were created to receive certain blessings and gifts from the gracious hand of our Creator. As His image bearers, God gave us desires for security, significance, glory, affirmation, love, purpose, and order. Marriage, fellowship, friendship, and other social connections were intended to be conduits of love, affirmation, affection, and intimacy as we became “fruitful and multiplied,” according to God’s blessing.

We still want all of these blessings that were given or promised to us, but now our hearts want them autonomously. We don’t want to receive God’s blessings in His way, in His time, according to His authority or design; we want them on our terms. Second, the soil itself is cursed, and the world and the relationships in it are broken. This combination means that our desires are problematic for us. Separated from God, the true source of every blessing we could rightly desire, we tend to substitute counterfeits to suit our fallen hearts. These counterfeits become our idols. When we speak of idols of the heart, we are referring to desires that have become so important to us that they have replaced God in our hearts. They control us, so we sometimes refer to these as controlling desires.

THE TRUNK: OUR FUNCTIONAL WORLDVIEWS

Our idolatrous desires both shape and are shaped by our thinking. We develop patterns of thought that form the grid for our interactions with our world. We sometimes call these “shoots” because they arise out of our heart’s interaction with the soil, but, because they continue to grow until they are strong and fixed, we can also call this the trunk. Both terms refer to our functional worldviews—our unspoken and largely unconscious set of beliefs about God, the world, ourselves, and other people, which form the basis for our daily lives. These are not the doctrinal affirmations you would likely recite if asked to describe what you officially believe. Instead, this set of beliefs is reflected in the ways that you actually live.

THE GOSPEL: NEW HEARTS, NEW TREES

The Tree Model illustrates that our behaviors—the fruit—are but a symptom of how the tree is functioning. When you hope in Christ, He renews your heart, and your entire tree is renewed. The Bible promises us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26–27) and describes our new life as being “in Christ” (Romans 8:1), “hidden with Christ” (Colossians 3:3), and—using a tree metaphor—“grafted into” the tree of salvation (Romans 11:17). The new heart and new life that Christ gives is the beginning of an entirely new tree. In the gospel, our true and eternal identity is *in Christ*, even though we still battle with the patterns and baggage of our old ways. Rather than simple self-discipline and willpower, though, the real source of change is new faith and affections in our hearts,



BY JIM WEIDENAAR

redeemed desires, and transformed worldviews—all given to us *in Christ*.

BACK TO MIKE

So how did this help Mike, the questioning struggler with whom I was speaking? By examining his soil, Mike identified a few influential experiences: His dad abandoned the family when he was nine, and his mom became an alcoholic, leaving Mike to care for three younger siblings. By outward appearances, he succeeded admirably in this role, proving himself capable and receiving praise from others, but Mike's heart became controlled by a fear of chaos and a strong desire for both control and affirmation—his roots. He developed the unspoken belief that, on one hand, people were a threat to him; on the other hand, their adoration of him was essential to his worth. He believed he must control people and things at all costs. Pornography was the fruit. In it, he fantasized about the adoration he craved while holding complete control and avoiding the chaos and threat of relationships. Now, no longer autonomous but armed with faith that his heart and identity were new in Christ, Mike brought all the truths and promises of the gospel to his experiences (soil), his desires (roots), and his thoughts (trunk).

Of course, this is a simplified and condensed version of Mike's story. In reality, change happens over a lifetime of discipleship, in relationship with others in the Body of Christ. This is why we want leaders and individuals in churches to have this tool. We use our Tree Model to train people in a biblical view of sin and the gospel.



JIM WEIDENAAR is the Director of Church Equipping and Greater Pittsburgh Region at Harvest USA. He has a burden to help those who are struggling with sexual sin come to understand and experience progress in gospel repentance.



The Porn Phenomenon

Wise as serpents and innocent as doves:
A realistic look at what Christians are up against



7%

of practicing Christians view
porn **weekly or more often**.



of those who view porn use **online videos**.



Practicing Christians are more than twice as likely as all others to feel a **sense of guilt** when they use porn (34% vs. 15%) and to say they are **currently trying to stop using porn** (19% vs. 7%).



Even for those who want to stop—most porn users do not have **someone in their life who is helping them avoid pornography**.



40%

of porn users would **rather not use porn at all**.



Source: The Barna Group, "The Porn Phenomenon," 2016.

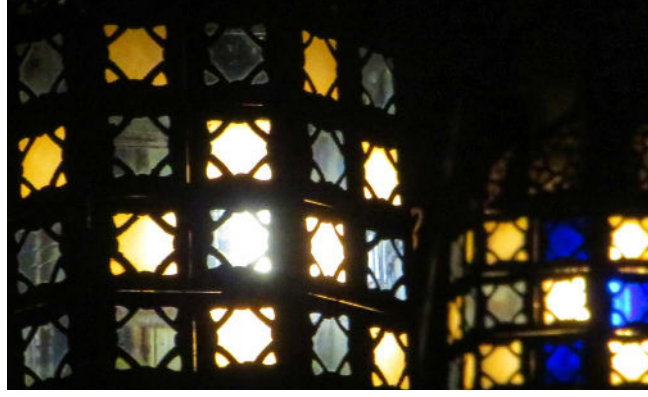


Join Our Team!

WE'RE HIRING!

To learn more about current job openings, please
contact our Chief Operating Officer Scott Pickering
at scott@harvestusa.org or 215-482-0111 (ext. 104).





SAME-SEX ATTRACTION, SIN, AND REDEMPTION

A Church Leader's Story



BY ANONYMOUS

Godly husband, godly father, godly leader in the Church. That was how I so wanted to be perceived by others, but it was a lie, and I hated myself because of it. The truth was that, for decades, I had struggled with sexually addictive behaviors: masturbation, pornography, and—eventually—binges of phone sex with other men. This was a secret that I was once convinced I would take to my grave because, if anyone knew the truth of who I was, I was sure I'd be despised, rejected, and abandoned by all, including my wife and children.

The fact that I struggled with sexual brokenness isn't surprising, especially in light of my story and the fact that I have a sinful nature and live in a fallen world. I grew up in a Christian home with godly parents, but I carried a deep wound. My dad excelled in whatever he did, and others fully expected me to follow in his footsteps, but what he excelled in was not what I wanted to pursue. Indeed, I avoided his world because I feared that I might fail, and, if I were to fail, I would be rejected by him and others. And so any deep connection with my dad was absent. He didn't give me the physical touch, the play, the frequent affirmation that I so desperately wanted and needed.



While I was still attracted to women, there was always the pull of the *other* that produced overwhelming guilt, toxic shame, and repeated, desperate calls to God.

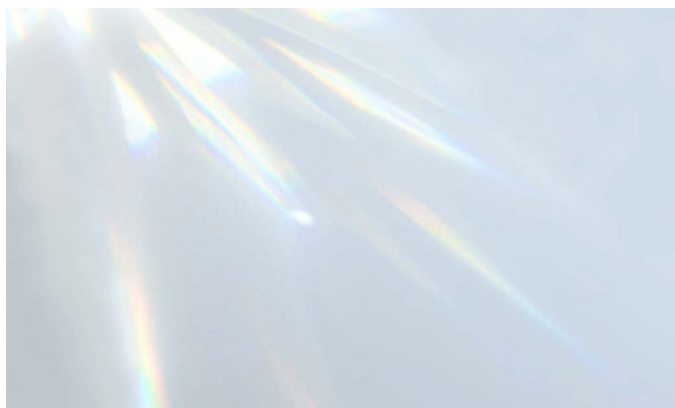
A therapist said to me decades later, “You were a nine- or ten-year-old boy, walking across an emotional desert, desperate for a drink of water, and you found one. It just happened to be from a polluted well.” The polluted well was the attention of an older neighborhood boy who introduced me to sexual activity. This would set in motion a decades-long history of struggle with same-sex attraction and sexual acting out. While I was still attracted to women, there was always the pull of the *other* that produced overwhelming guilt, toxic shame, and repeated, desperate calls to God to remove this despised thorn.

My early sexualization was punctuated by two other traumatic events during adolescence. When I was around 14, my dad invited a 24-year-old man with whom he had a professional relationship to spend the night—to share my room—when this man was in town for a special event. Little did my dad or I know that the conversation this man engaged me in after the lights were out would quickly turn sexual and would lead to sexual activity that left me devastated with guilt and shame. Similarly, a sexual encounter with a predatory college professor at age 18 would also reinforce the extent of the brokenness I felt.

During my time in professional school, I fell in love with a wonderful Christian woman, and we married soon after. Finally, I thought; surely marriage would fix me. Marriage was what I needed in order to quit doing the things that brought so much pain. And it did work, for a while, but, gradually, the same old sexually addictive behaviors crept back into my life. I told myself that I was only trying to reduce the stress resulting from my job.

I told myself that once we had children, I would stop. I would have to stop. That is what it would take. But the children came, and my sin didn't stop. Against a backdrop of frequent masturbation and binging on pornography, I kept trying to find a way to stop, believing that God and I could sort this out, that no one else needed to know.

When I was in my mid-30s, my family and I were members of a small, reformed church in the Midwest. I was approached about serving as an elder. I resisted at first, feeling like a hypocrite, but after repeated overtures from the pastor and a godly man on the session of the church, I agreed to have my name placed before the congregation. I told myself that if I were elected to the office of ruling elder, I would have to stop doing what brought so much guilt and shame. I was elected to the office of ruling elder and ordained, but, much to my disappointment, the miraculous healing I was seeking did not materialize. It was not long before I was engaging in the same old addictive patterns, at times



Man was created for real intimacy, something I had never experienced because I was too fearful that I would be completely rejected and abandoned if anyone knew who I really was.

contemplating whether suicide wouldn't be a better alternative.

And so the pattern was set, and the decades passed. Where was God in all of this? Why wouldn't He remove this thorn? I became more and more convinced that there might not be any hope for me, disregarding all that I had been taught throughout my life about God's faithfulness. In my early 40s, my wife and I were in a new city as a result of my work, and the evidence of God's faithfulness to me began to take form, although I would not see that until years later. My wife, while serving on the missions committee of the church of which we were members and in which I was serving as a ruling elder, came across a request for support from Harvest USA. I can remember her saying while she was reading the literature, "This is the most grace-filled, redemptive approach to helping individuals escape their bondage to sexual sin that I have ever seen." I was intrigued and began reading the Harvest USA literature myself. I found a modicum of hope, but I was still too prideful to confess my sin to my pastor or my wife.

I see much more clearly now how God was at work in my heart even in those dark times. I would eventually confess my sexual brokenness and the details of how I acted out sexually to my pastor in a moment of desperation. He met me in my brokenness; he held me, he wept with

me, he repeated the truth of the gospel to me, and he encouraged me to tell my wife about my sexual struggle. It was a proper suggestion but one that I had too much fear to pursue at that time. That confession would come several years later, but, in that moment, I was met with the goodness and grace of the gospel by my pastor, and it gave me hope.

I told myself that this is what it would take—confession of sexual sin to my pastor—to break the hold that my sin had on me. Once again, I received short-term relief, but my sinful, addictive patterns soon grabbed hold of me again.

So I continued to struggle until, several years later, God gave me a desire to pursue bi-weekly telephone counseling with David White, who was the Men's Ministry Coordinator at Harvest USA at the time. David kindly and with great patience worked with me to help me see my profound brokenness. He too encouraged me to confess my sin to my wife. When I finally did so in a moment of great guilt and shame following a binge of acting out, we were thrown into a major crisis that led to intense marital counseling and a sexual sobriety contract in which I promised to disclose to my wife within 24 hours any sexual acting out. Finally, I thought to myself, this is what it took to enable me to stop. But it didn't. Fourteen months later, I binged again while my wife was out of town and continued my deceit by failing to confess to her as I had promised. I was convinced that if I kept my promise to confess to her, I would lose my marriage and my family.

The truth always comes out, and I am grateful now that that was true in my case. Two months later—on August 19, 2008, to be exact—my wife confronted me, and I knew that I had to answer her pointed question honestly, confessing to what had happened two months earlier. We were immediately thrown into a major crisis, but, in retrospect, this moment was God's gift, for it was this gift of desperation to save myself and my marriage that God used to get me to a twelve-step fellowship meeting with other men, many of whom were Christians, and the missing piece to my decades-long search was found.

In the Garden of Eden, after God had created Adam, He pronounced, "It is not good that man should be alone." God pronounced that He had created Adam for connection not only with Himself but also with others. Yes, God gave Eve to Adam as a helpmeet, but He also designed Adam for deep connection with others. Man was created for real intimacy, something I had never experienced because I was too fearful that I would be completely rejected and abandoned if anyone knew who I really was.

As I began attending twelve-step meetings and experiencing an honesty from others that I had never before experienced, I slowly discovered that my deepest fear of anyone knowing my most shameful secrets is what God used to bring true repentance and healing. As I began to let go of my secrets and discover anew God's goodness, kindness, and unfathomable grace, the transformation of my heart began.

While this transformation would occur slowly over the next few years, I discovered real intimacy, not only with these other men who loved me and encouraged me in a walk of obedience, but also real intimacy with my wife and my children. I developed deep friendships with other men that were transformative. I gradually came to realize that this was what God designed me for, that there was no way I could have ever been freed from my addiction to lust without the community of other broken but redeemed brothers in Christ.

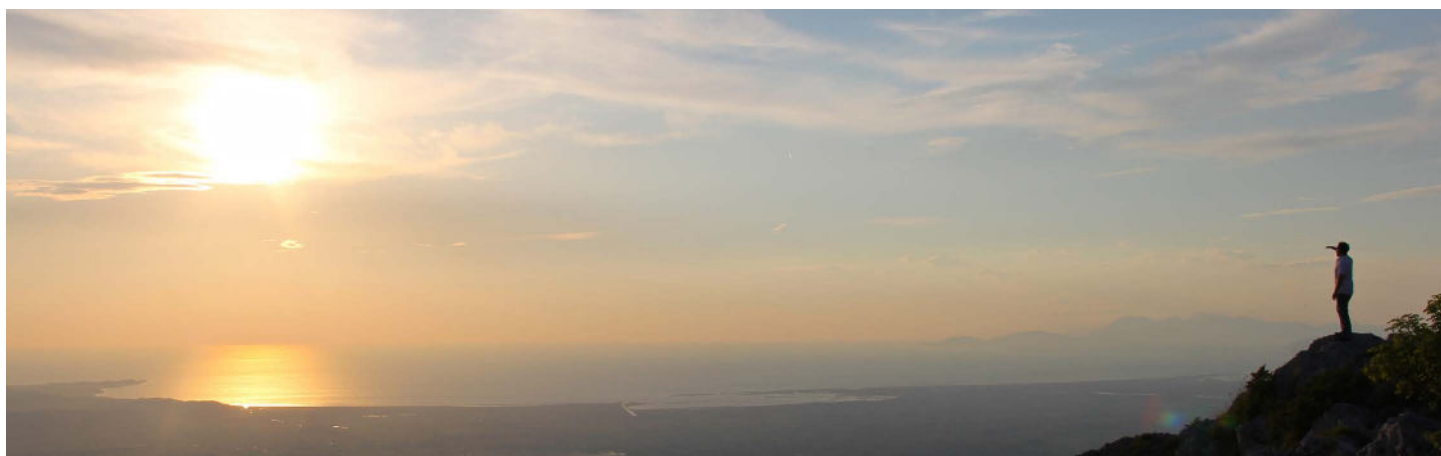
My wife and I have done a lot of therapeutic work over the past twelve years. There have been some rough times along the path of healing, but now, more than ever, we both see God's merciful hand in our lives, confirming again and again the good news of the gospel. For that, we are both grateful. And the pastor to whom I had confessed my sin years earlier has walked with us through many rough times; I am grateful that he is still my pastor today. He loved me, and he showed up as the hands and feet of Christ when I did not think myself worthy of God's love.

Today, my life is much different than it was for those many decades during which I attempted, in my pride, to live life alone in order to protect my secrets. I have meaningful, close friendships with a number of men

of all ages. I have a deeper intimacy with my wife and my children, who know my whole story. I have a much more profound intimacy with Jesus, who makes me and all things new. I have the great honor and privilege of sponsoring and mentoring six amazing young men, ranging in age from 27 to 40 who, like me, struggle with sexual brokenness but, by God's grace, are living in freedom and seeking to walk in obedience before God one day at a time. God gives me a front-row seat to watch the Holy Spirit at work in these men's hearts and minds.

I will always be grateful for Harvest USA. Its ministry of hope, healing, and forgiveness rooted in the reality of the gospel touched my life during a dark time of my soul and led surely and amazingly to the reality of knowing God and others in a way I never thought was possible. I will always be grateful for the local church, for a pastor who held me, wept with me, and repeated the truth of the gospel to me in that dark moment. And I am grateful that I have a church today where my pastors know my story and have often sent other men in my church to me—to share my story and to sit with them in their brokenness, offering the hope of the gospel and the hope of deep friendships with other men who struggle as they do. I no longer have to live life as the hypocrite who desperately wanted to be affirmed by others as “godly husband, godly father, godly leader in the Church.” Today, I have a fresh realization of the truth of the gospel and my desperate need for true intimacy with God and with other men.

In this article, we do not disclose our ministry recipient's real name because he has requested to remain anonymous.



As I began to let go of my secrets and discover anew God's goodness, kindness, and unfathomable grace, the transformation of my heart began.



MEET THE STAFF

Jeffrey Minnis



NAME

Jeffrey Minnis

HOMETOWN

Philadelphia, PA

POSITION AT HARVEST USA

Administrative Assistant

DESCRIPTION OF WORK AT HARVEST USA

As the administrative assistant, my duties cover a variety of things. I welcome visitors and ministry recipients when they arrive at our office. When people call Harvest USA, I answer their general inquiries, connect them to our direct ministry staff, and sometimes even have the pleasure of praying for them. As you can imagine, many of the calls I receive are from men and women who are really struggling, so prayer is a way that I can serve them right then and there. I also help to process donations, so I input gifts in our donor database and issue receipts for those gifts. When Harvest USA staff are getting ready to teach at an event or exhibit at a conference, I prepare and ship the materials they might need. I've also had the opportunity to exhibit for Harvest at various events, and that was a lot of fun!

HOW DID YOU GET TO HARVEST USA?

I started working at Harvest USA about seven years ago, after a former Harvest USA staff member, who attended my church, offered me the administrative assistant position.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SCRIPTURE?

The whole of Psalm 119. I love the way that the psalmist holds onto the Word of God through all the circumstances of his life: the joys, the pains, and the falls that he experiences. In every situation, he lifts up the Word and centers his very soul on it. This psalm gives

such a resounding reminder that, day by day, we are to connect to His Word, to delight in it, and to meditate on it, for, when we do this, we are really delighting in and worshipping God, who is the Word!

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH?

Ten years ago, when I began attending my church, the things that stood out to me most were the authentic love and fellowship of the folks there. This made me say, "Yes! I want to be a part of this church!"

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT LIVING IN PHILADELPHIA?

Now, this will probably sound a little out of the ordinary, but one of the things that I love about Philadelphia is the bus system here. It is so easy to get around to various parts of the city by bus. I found out many years ago that not every city has this, so I have learned to really appreciate it. In addition, as a youth with no car, it was the bus system that taught me how to get around Philadelphia and its surrounding suburbs. Now, I am "that guy" whom my friends call when they need to catch a bus to get somewhere, and I don't mind at all because I like helping!

CAN YOU TELL US AN INTERESTING FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

Here is an interesting fact that most people outside of my family do not know: I wanted and studied to be a comic book artist. I grew up drawing, and, at the age of 15, I decided that this was the profession for me, so I started creating my own stories and illustrating them. When I was 20, I went to a vocational-technical school for cartooning, and later I even met and befriended some people who were well-established comic book artists for both DC and Marvel. Since I'm at Harvest USA now, I would say the Lord had another good calling in mind for me!



AN INTERVIEW WITH
ELLEN MARY DYKAS AND
SHALEE LEHNING ON

Sexual Faithfulness



Earlier this year, Harvest USA released *Sexual Faithfulness: Gospel-Infused, Practical Discipleship for Women* as a free digital download in our online store. In this interview, Ellen Mary Dykas and Shalee Lehning share a bit about the resource and why they wrote it.

TELL ME ABOUT SEXUAL FAITHFULNESS AND WHO YOU WROTE IT FOR.

EMD: *Sexual Faithfulness* (“SF”) is a ten-week study for women who need help applying the gospel to their sexual and relational struggles. It’s our newest small group curriculum for women, but it’s also designed for use in one-on-one discipleship relationships. A Participant’s Guide is available for the woman who is struggling, and a Leader’s Guide is available for the woman who is facilitating a small group or discipling a woman who struggles. At the start of each lesson, a brief video also orients participants to the topic for the week.

WHAT’S THE STORY BEHIND SEXUAL FAITHFULNESS? WHY DID YOU WRITE IT?

SL: Women have been asking us for a resource like this for years. We’re delighted that it’s finally here! Women of different ages facing a variety of struggles—such as same-sex attraction, pornography, masturbation, unhealthy relationships, and habitual codependency—asked if we could provide more guidance for their path towards relational and sexual integrity. We’ve written *SF* to meet that need.

HOW DOES SEXUAL FAITHFULNESS DIFFER FROM SEXUAL SANITY FOR WOMEN?

EMD: Let me start by explaining what makes them similar! Both *SF* and *Sexual Sanity for Women* (“SSFW”), Harvest USA’s first curriculum for women, are discipleship resources designed to help women grow in sexual integrity. Integrity in regards to our sexuality means that we are seeking to live faithfully according to God’s Word in this area of our lives with our words, thoughts, and actions.

Now, let’s talk about what makes them different and how they complement one another. *SSFW* leads women through the process of examining their hearts and the influences that have shaped their sexual and relational sin patterns and behaviors. It lays an important foundation upon which *SF* builds.

SF then gets really practical by applying the gospel to specific issues and pressure points that women who struggle with sexual and relational sin face on a daily basis. Some of these issues include building healthy friendships, suffering, beliefs about men, and spiritual



Women of different ages facing a variety of struggles asked if we could provide more guidance for their path towards relational and sexual integrity.

warfare. Reading *SSFW* isn’t necessary in order to work through *SF*, but we do recommend that you start with *SSFW*, then move on to *SF*. This way, you’ll get more out of *SF*.

So, a quick recap! *SSFW* answers the why of sexual and relational sin—why we sin in the ways that we do. *SF* tackles the how of overcoming sin and pursuing sexual faithfulness.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THE LEADER’S GUIDE, AND HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM THE PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE?

SL: The Leader’s Guide assists leaders with small group discussion for each lesson, and it also provides helpful suggestions for navigating complex and deeply personal issues that may come to the surface as women dig into the study.

The Participant’s Guide includes a short lesson of 2–3 pages and a series of questions for each week. The Leader’s Guide includes the questions with detailed answers and notes for each week. As a result, the leader will also need to download the Participant’s Guide to access the lesson material.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR SEXUAL FAITHFULNESS AND HOW IT WILL SERVE THE LOCAL CHURCH?

EMD: On any given day, we minister to sisters in Christ

who struggle with sexual addiction, unruly desires, crippling shame, and hopelessness. As you can imagine, they're coming to us from dark places, but they are actively seeking to walk in the light and follow Jesus. Isn't that beautiful? By the grace of God, these women have shown us so much courage. We're excited about *SF* because we believe it will give these women real help and gospel hope in the midst of their daily struggles.

Our desire is that this resource will not only encourage women to look to Jesus and God's Word as their ultimate hope for transformation, but that it will also equip women in local churches to proactively engage the topic of sexuality alongside each other. I've spoken with so many women's ministry leaders over the years who desire to engage these issues, but they feel intimidated, under-equipped, and unsure of how to start. *SF*, as well as its predecessor, *SSFW*, have extensive leader's notes to guide, coach, and embolden women who need help navigating these sensitive but crucial topics with the women in their care.

NOW THAT *SEXUAL FAITHFULNESS* HAS BEEN AVAILABLE FOR FOUR MONTHS, WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST ENCOURAGING FEEDBACK YOU'VE RECEIVED?

SL: A pastor who endorsed our material pointed out how the Church has a long history of addressing questions and struggles surrounding sex with silence, shame, and guilt. He went on to share how *SF* redefines the culture's selfish view of sexuality, confronts a broken view of gender, and pushes the reader to engage with a faithful, biblical understanding of sex. He also acknowledged how this study removes this topic from the shadows and shapes both participants and church leaders to better understand how to engage in healthy community.

It encourages me that even brothers in the faith, especially those in leadership roles, see the growing need for this type of resource.

HOW CAN READERS GET THEIR FREE COPY OF *SEXUAL FAITHFULNESS*?

EMD: I'm glad you asked! If you're reading a digital copy of this magazine issue, you can click on the following hyperlinks to download *SF* from our online store: **Participant's Guide** and **Leader's Guide**. If you're reading a physical copy of this magazine issue, simply visit harvestusa.org/sexualfaithfulness, where you'll be directed to our online store.

ANY FINAL THOUGHTS TO SHARE WITH OUR MAGAZINE READERS?

SL: I'd love to give a shout-out to all of our donors who

Our desire is that this resource will not only encourage women to look to Jesus and God's Word as their ultimate hope for transformation, but that it will also equip women in local churches to proactively engage the topic of sexuality alongside each other.



made it possible for us to produce this resource and make it available to you. There are donors who support Ellen and me personally—they made it possible for us to write this resource—and then there are donors who support Harvest USA's general fund—they made it possible for us to give this resource away for free. We're so grateful for these many women and men who believe in our ministry.

Finally, I must thank the courageous women who have reached out to us for help and taught us so much by inviting us into their journeys of faith and repentance. Thank you, sisters, for allowing us this great privilege!



NEW FROM HARVEST USA!



- **Participant's Guide and Leader's Guide** available as free digital downloads
- **Ten-week study** applies the gospel to your sexual and relational struggles
- **Addresses** building healthy friendships, suffering, beliefs about men, spiritual warfare, and more
- **Designed for use in small groups and discipleship relationships**

"*Sexual Faithfulness* is a gift to the local church. It shifts women's understanding of sex and sexuality from a self-focused, self-gratifying view to a Christ-dependent, Christ-glorifying reality."

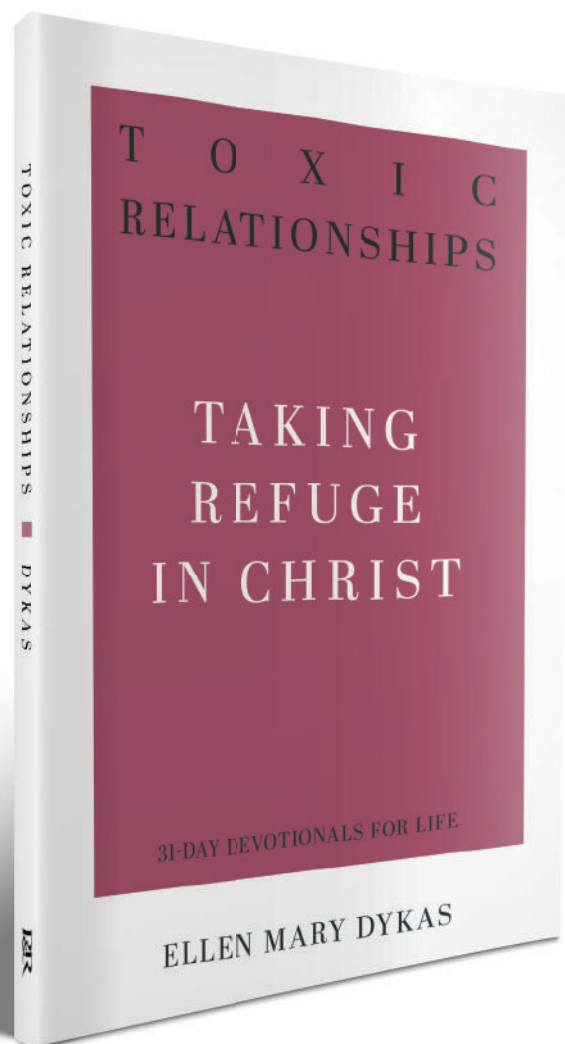


— **LESLIE BENNETT**

Director of Women's Ministry Initiatives, *Revive Our Hearts*

INTOXICATING TO TOXIC

A new resource from Ellen Mary Dykas



Are you caught in a relationship that is all-consuming, obsessive, and damaging? Use this devotional to reset your priorities by finding freedom—and lasting security—in Christ and the gospel.

“Ellen speaks hopeful biblical truths to people who desire to be deeply known and loved yet find themselves hurt and empty in their relationships. Each devotional is filled with tender wisdom.”

DARBY A. STRICKLAND,
Author, *Is It Abuse?*

“With a counselor’s wisdom and a friend’s sympathy, Dykas brings readers to passages of Scripture that . . . point again and again to the gracious comfort that can be found in Christ alone.”

MEGAN HILL, Author, *A Place to Belong*

“For those who have been hurt, trapped, and betrayed by toxic relationships, Ellen gives way to neither despair nor dismissal but like a gentle friend guides us along a path of healing and restoration.”

JONATHAN D. HOLMES, Founder and Executive Director, Fieldstone Counseling



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