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TRUMPET SOUNDS

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MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

Before any marriage we find these stages:

1. Seeking our significant other
2. Finding our significant other
3. Learn each other and weather storms together
4. Going together through the good times as well as the difficulties
5. Engagement
6. Rehearsal dinner
7. Wedding
8. Reception
9. Ever after

There are those who rush into the marriage without learning one another or weathering the difficulties only to elope into a fantasy of quick passionate love that does not have the stamina for the difficulties that come. Disillusionment follows

THE VOWS

Before the pronouncement of marriage there are vows between the bride and her groom. There are vows between Jesus the Christ and His bride as well. We find these in Psalms 91. I have written this before several years ago, but often it is good to renew these vows. This is as good a time as any. I will leave a blank for you to fill in your "I dos" or "I wills". Each vow in which you agree, you will find God's vow of blessing back to you. That being said, we must first understand that a vow is not merely the word of commit-

ment but also the actions of that vow being performed.

Before you start, be prayerful that the Holy Spirit will reveal insight to your commitment for a ready heart before God.

- 1.-2. Seeking our significant other and finding out that His name is Jesus
3. Learning of Jesus and who we are in Him. Learning how to weather the storms together
4. Having a steady relationship whether in good or difficult times
5. Engagement is the ring of eternal covenant promise to Him
6. The rehearsal is preparation for His coming
7. The wedding day arrives and we are gathered together to meet Him in the air
8. Is entering into the banquet table having heard,

ment but also the actions of that vow being performed. Before you start, be prayerful that the Holy Spirit will reveal insight to your commitment for a ready heart before God.

Ps 91:

Will you dwell in the secret place of the most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. _____

Will you say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust." _____

"Thou good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of the Lord."

9. ETERNITY...HAPPILY EVER AFTER!

There are those, however, who skip many of those points in a fast whirlwind relationship eloping into a quick passionate marriage without learning of Jesus or who they are in Him. As difficulties come they neither have the stamina nor have they built the faith to weather the storms. They become disillusioned and leave the relationship for another.

We find ourselves at this time:

Joel 2:16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts:let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

Time to come out of the closet!

Then He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Will you not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. _____

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THE VOWS continued

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Will you make the LORD, which is your refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; _____

Then no evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Will you tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. _____

Will you set your love upon Him, _____

Therefore will He deliver you: He will set you on high, because you hath known His name/character.

Will you call upon Him, _____

Then He will answer you: He will be with you in trouble; He will deliver you, and honour you. With long life will He satisfy you, and shew you His salvation.

By the power vested in me through the Spirit of the Living God, I now pronounce you the bride of Christ in covenant marriage to Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

THE ENABLER

To enable means to:

1. provide somebody with means: to provide somebody with the resources, authority, or opportunity to do something
2. make something possible: to make something possible or feasible
3. give somebody or something legal authority: to confer legal power or authority on somebody or something

God enables us through His Word to be more than conquerors with power and authority. We, however, are not any more than signs posted along the road pointing the Way, the Truth and the Life, which is Jesus. We are not called to become the enabler. When Christians get to the side of enabling, especially for a chronically needy person, it becomes one, unholy matrimony of broken vows and heartache.

Many years ago, in my early walk of ministry, I would adopt little needy ones crossing my path. I picked them up, answered their questions with Word and became available to them every time they encountered a bump in the road,

as I thought any good Christian should be expected to do. However, I found that, in truth, I was an enabler being quick to create a context in which the needy one could play out his/her own script (not fulfilling the Scriptures for themselves). I was the clean-up crew, the bank, the Great Mother, the counselor, coach, confidante and priest. I became the unwavering refuge from the big, bad world, which I had created myself to be, not only ultimately dependable, but virtually indispensable to the continual needy behavior of the one I enabled. In other words, move over God. Now, had anyone told me that I was making myself of the utmost importance over God, I would have had a snappy denial. Through the years and experience, I have sharpened up wisdom...no more denying it.

I should have known, since, as a teacher, I taught the mathematical process but allowed the students to work their own problems. If they ran into difficulty, I would again walk them through the process, but at no time did I do all their work as they looked on. Some students would save their work for home knowing their parents would end up working the problems for them,

which gave their child no practice of trial and error from which to learn. Test time came, and they had not learned how to work a simple process but relied on constant aid. Without aid they were handicapped to failure.

We are to be a ready witness and a doer of God's Word but not to be the doer for everyone else. We can pray for the salvation of others, but we cannot accept Christ for them. We can pray for the healing of others, but we cannot receive it for them. You cannot bleed for someone who insists on running through life with a sharp knife...pointed upward! We can only take people to the throne of God in intercession, yet we will not be their character witness come judgment day when they face God alone. We teach a toddler to balance, take some steps and finally walk. If we carried them forever, we would handicap the effort that God is trying to bring about.

Being a signpost pointing the way is way less frustrated than being an enabler, when the needy not only require your every breath but act as if you now owe them every sacrifice for which they have learned to take full advantage.

LOSING SIGHT

Many Christians have lost sight of the good news and become blinded by the sin of others to make their judgments and sermons. Yet, if you look at it, the only one Jesus actually admonished of sin were the religious leaders. To the sinners He preached a new hope, healing and deliverance. Jesus went about healing the wounded and admonishing the "wound-ers".

There are secret sins and obvious sins, but Jesus is the forgiver of them all. In what Scripture did Jesus...*Himself* say that He hated sin? Jesus did not lay His life down for hatred of sin but for the compassion of all sinners. Hatred had no part in His willingness to die.

We like to say that as Christians

we hate the sin yet love the sinner. That has neither Scriptural basis nor should it be true of Christianity. Christians by and large hate the sin and are repulsed by the sinner, if truth be told.

We make no room for the homosexual in heaven, even though Jesus did. We preach against the sin rather than displaying the love of Christ. We do just as the Pharisees of Jesus' day: **Matt 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.**

Think of what riled Jesus. Those who used the temple of

God as a business and those religious leaders who shut heaven so no one could enter.

What is wrong today with the picture of a heavy-set evangelist getting up and condemning homosexuals? He has lost sight of his own sin to one he supposes as greater. In reality of the Scriptures there is no sin greater than sin itself!

Jesus preached the good news to all those who had been under the bondage of sin. He addressed those thinking themselves righteous to cast the first stone knowing there could be no takers. Yet the church passes these stones out to be cast. Is it any wonder that lesbian and gay groups have formed not only to deflect these

stones but to hurl them back. When people are hated their response is to hate back. Because Christians have cast stones, Christianity as a whole has been made an unloving enemy.

Jesus was not the enemy of the sinners, but the Savior to them.

We do not need to tell sinners of their sin; we need to tell them of their Savior...The Savior can take care of the sin. That being said, it would behoove we who claim to be righteous to deal with pride and those petty sins we excuse as not as bad as murder and homosexuality.

Two things destroying our nation: hatred and religiosity. Without grace, we are none saved!

GRACE OVER CARES

We see *grace* as a gracious, benevolent word yet not a word of power. We come to this conclusion from God's answer to Paul's infirmity: **2 Cor 12:9 My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.**

First of all, what was Paul's infirmity? The word infirmity is *astheneia*: want of strength, weakness, frailty, feebleness, want of strength and capacity requisite, want to understand a thing-to do things great and glorious or to restrain corrupt desires, to bear trials and troubles.

So what was this infirmity? We cannot guess an opinion. Paul himself tells us that it is weakness from continually being reproached and persecuted. He does not mention disease: **2 Cor 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.** In God's own answer He declares His strength over Paul's weak-

ness (Trials from Satan): **for my strength** (dunamis miraculous power) **is made perfect** (teleioō completed, accomplished, fulfilled) **in weakness.**

There is another clue to Paul's infirmity in the little word **thorn**: **2 Cor 12:7...lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet** (kolazō: curtail) **me, lest I should be exalted above measure.**

Thorn: skolops which is a pointed piece of wood, splinter

Flesh: sarx which is either of a physical nature or of the carnal mind such as anxiety, worry or frustration from cares, etc.

If you take this literally, it would seem as though Satan attacked Paul with a splinter! This is not the case, but **thorn** is the operative word. If thorn is not literal but symbolic, what is the symbol? Matt 13:22 is Jesus telling us in a parable that His word cast among the thorns signified **cares** (merimna: distractions,

solicitude, which is anxiety and concern). We further see thorns as cares of mankind being placed upon Jesus head at His crucifixion: **Isa 53:5...the chastisement of our peace was upon him...**

Paul, like many in ministry got caught up in the cares of feeling impotent and unable to produce results. Satan masters at giving ministers a thorn in the flesh making us second guess our purpose, so that we feel impotent and unable to produce results for God's Kingdom. There is not one minister of God who has not been given this thorn in the flesh. We get caught up in the cares and concerns losing trust in our ability to hear from God. It is a direct hit against our faith. Many of us have had Satan whisper that we live on the edge of effectiveness and were snared of the lie. This is one of the greatest tools, outside of fear, that the enemy uses knowing that as a man thinks in his heart so is he.

God gives us His grace and that grace trumps the enemy's lies.

Grace is **Charis** (From the root chairō: *meaning to be well; of good cheer*): - acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace (-ious), joy, liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy).

Grace is not simply a nice, passive word to be sure. If we look at this Scripture we see amazing power: **Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved** (sōzō: to save, that is, deliver or protect: - heal, pre-serve, save (self), do well, be or make whole) **through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:**

Grace is not a little matter, but has the power to take on any issue we face whether physical or mental attack. The next time you are feeling as if you are producing nothing of any value to the Kingdom of God, remember it is Satan's messenger buffeting you with a thorn in the flesh, but God's grace is sufficient to any tactic in the enemy's arsenal!

FRONTAL LOBOTOMY BY THE SPIRIT

In intercession and counseling I have had to ask God to show me some specific things to know how best to deal in the different situations and circumstances brought forth. When you ask God a question you will get more answer than you imagined.

I have prayed with many women going through marital problems whose spouse was addicted to pornography. Statistics have it that in a poll of 1,000 respondents, 50 percent of Christian men and 20 percent of Christian women were found to be addicted to pornography. Here are some of the facts uncovered:

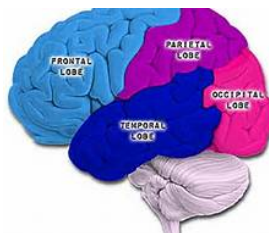
- ✦ 51% of pastors say cyber-porn is a possible temptation. 37% say it is a current struggle (Christianity Today, Leadership Survey, December 2001).
- ✦ 4 in 10 pastors have visited a porn site (Christianity Today, Leadership Survey, December 2001).
- ✦ 17.8% of all "born again" Christian adults (in America) have visited sexually-oriented Websites (Zogby survey conducted for Focus on the Family, 2000).
- ✦ 34% of readers of *Today's Christian Woman's* online newsletter admitted to intentionally accessing Internet porn
- ✦ A 2003 survey from Internet Filter Review reported that 47 percent of Christians admit pornography is a major problem in their homes.
- ✦ An internet survey conducted by Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in 2002 found 30 percent of 6,000 pastors had viewed internet porn in the last 30 days.
- ✦ A Christianity Today Leadership Survey in 2001 reported 37 percent of pastors have viewed internet porn.
- ✦ Family Safe Media reports 53 percent of men belonging to the Christian organization Promise Keepers visit porn sites every week.
- ✦ One in seven calls to Focus on the Family's Pastoral Care Hotline is related to internet pornography.
- ✦ Today's Christian Woman in 2003 found that one in six women, including Christians, struggles with pornography addiction.

These stats are taken from Christians only, so you can just imagine the bondage world wide!

God created an amazing organ with in the human specie call the brain. What are the effects of pornography on the brain? There are many parts to the brain

each having its own function. I want you to see and understand what can happen through this addiction because it is much more than simply naughty pictures. It causes an atrophy in the brain, which damages one's personality and emotions. Since this is a major issue in the break down of families, we all need to learn. So be patient and learn as I did.

The Cerebrum has four main parts and their functions:



Frontal Lobe- associated with reasoning, planning, parts of speech, movement, emotions, and problem solving

Parietal Lobe- associated with movement, orientation, recognition, perception of stimuli

Occipital Lobe- associated with visual processing

Temporal Lobe- associated with perception and recognition of auditory stimuli, memory, and speech

The frontal lobe is a critical center, the seat of emotions and judgments related to sympathy, which is the ability to feel sorrow for someone else's suffering, and empathy, which is the ability to understand another's feelings and problems. It is also the seat of understanding humor, including subtle witticisms and word plays. The frontal lobes also recognize sarcasm and irony. This is the lobe of the brain where recognition of deception occurs, which in the spirit is called discernment. The frontal lobes control the processes called "mentalizing" upon which our ability to understand another's mental processes lie.

Other functions that the frontal lobes control are the functioning of sequencing events, which is the ability to plan a series of steps needed to perform a task. Spontaneity of facial expression and of interaction with others is also controlled by the frontal lobes as is the function of **flexibility in thinking processes**. The ability to solve problems, which often de-

pends on flexible thinking, and the ability to correctly express language are both controlled by the frontal lobes as well. In addition to this, as stated our personalities are controlled by the frontal lobes. This is not all, though, as they also control movement, initiation, emotional impulsivity, memory, sexual behavior, and judgment. The problematic **opposite of this flexibility** is perseveration, which is the fixed persistence of a single thought. Both attentiveness of focus on a single task and resistance to emotional lability, which is commonly referred to as mood changes or mood swings, are controlled by the frontal lobes.

Why am I giving you this little rundown of the frontal lobe? God would have us understand that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, yet there are things that can actually change the make-up of God's good handiwork in which a frontal lobotomy by the Spirit is necessary.

Pornography is a brain transformer that impairs moral principles. Exposure to sexually explicit material is correlated with social anxiety, depression, low motivation, erectile dysfunction, concentration problems, and negative self perceptions in terms of physical appearance and sexual functioning.

Because the human brain is the biological anchor of who we are, it is helpful to understand how it operates. Knowing how it is wired together and where it is sensitive can help us understand why pornography affects people the way it does.

Sexually explicit material triggers mirror neurons in the male brain. These neurons, which are involved with the process for how to mimic a behavior, contain a motor system that correlates to the planning out of a behavior. In the case of pornography, this mirror neuron system triggers the arousal, which leads to sexual tension and a need for an outlet. The unfortunate reality is that when the addict acts out with these images, this leads to hormonal and neurological consequences, which are designed to bind him/her to the object he/she is focusing on.

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FRONTAL LOBOTOMY BY THE SPIRIT continued

In God's plan, this would be his/her spouse, but for many men it is an image on a screen. Pornography thus enslaves the viewer to an image, hijacking the biological response intended to bond a man to his wife and therefore inevitably loosening that bond.

So far I have touched on the physiological aspect, but there is a spiritual side as well. In addition to pornography comes a door ajar to your soul. Vulnerability, like a weakened immune system, leaves one open to an invasion, in this case the access of a spiritual entity...demon. "Well, Sister, demons cannot effect Christians!" You are right; they must be chosen...invited, and they are more than willing and ready to come and wipe their filthy feet all over your nice clean foundation!

Everything we do or do not do, that is, everything we choose

affects us either positively or negatively. Nothing is neutral in our choices. To help ensure the health of your frontal lobe, avoid input that is excessively numbing. A vacant house will attract a tenant of the wrong kind who will invite others worse than itself (Matt 12:45).

How we pray depends on the circumstances. For one afflicted with this addiction who wants deliverance is different than one who is addicted and it is the spouse only who is wanting the deliverance. When the party afflicted is a willing participant in the deliverance, it is a matter of binding the strong man (evil spirit) and a recalibration of the frontal lobe in healing it back to God's handiwork in restoration through Jesus' stripes. The healing is not just in Jesus' stripes but in the crown of thorns Jesus wore for our peace. Pornography takes all peace away, but the chastisement of our peace was

upon Him AND with His stripes we are healed. Getting into fellowship is a key to success.

Now for the one who is afflicted but buys the enemy's lie of secrecy, which translates that there is no willingness for their participation, then the prayers of the spouse or parent are crucial. Those spouses or parents praying are archers sending out arrows to meet a target. However, these are not just any arrows, but the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous causes them to be "smart arrows" that will follow the target even though it tries to escape.

By the term effectual, fervent prayer does not have the same meaning as nagging or throwing out Scriptures for which they end in putting up a wall against the nagger as well as God's Word.

Whether or not the addict is a participant in his/her healing,

they cannot...I repeat they cannot stay in that pit if they have the love of an intercessor who will not faint but stand strong in the power and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even if you are not in this situation, you read the statistics of men and women in the church who are addicted. They are displaying mental problems that seem to find no solution because unbeknownst to any is the secret sin of pornography. The secrecy is the enemy's blackmail to continue living vicariously through our husbands, wives, children and grandchildren.

In this country to date, our government makes laws protecting sexual preferences over God given innocent life. I am not talking about homosexual people, but about **sexual preferences** carrying more weight than life itself. Who would have ever thought it could happen?

POWERFUL PURSUIT

In counseling I have found that many times those who need healing pursue healing more than the Healer. Those needing deliverance pursue deliverance more than the Deliverer. In other words, people seem to focus on solving the problems rather than seeking the Problem Solver.

Matt 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Nowhere in that Scripture does it say to seek the "things" no matter how crucial the circumstances you face.

Usually those pursuing the answer have a long battle because the focus will take you up, down and all around your emotions. You go from a bad report to one better and back down again. You find yourself being led by the gnarled, twisted road when the road of the Lord

is straight ahead. Pursuing the answer is a roller-coaster ride that does not seem to end.

It is not unusual to find that when the pursuit is over in a mediocre remedy with its side effects, it produces a mediocre faith in a mediocre god.

The answers we seek are a futile pursuit. The only pursuit worthy of the answer is in seeking the Kingdom of God first from which all healing, deliverance and prosperity come. Seeking your answer over the Kingdom is out of order...out of stock!

There was a man who did not know of all the relatives in his family until he won the lottery when they made a heartfelt appearance. The man, however, was not fooled by their motives since they displayed no need to know who he was but what he could do for

them.

I have found that people who have not made God's Kingdom their first pursuit are chronic of needs always. They do not see that "The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want", for their needs are greater in scope than their Savior.

There is a lot of truth to the saying "A watched pot never boils". Something you are waiting for will not happen simply because you are concentrating on it.

You are either **waiting for** the Lord or **waiting on** Him...in the later you will find success.

If you want to get onto a powerful pursuit then get your eyes on Jesus and off the circumstances. Seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness and anything you need will be added to you even when you forgot about the need!