***Re:generation*: Who Is Master of Your Domain? (dealing with masturbation)**

**Touchy; not taking a hands-off approach to this; solid grasp of this issue**

1. **REGEN Introduction and Prayer:** Lord, may we understand Your design for our body, mind and sexuality.
2. **Masturbation. What Does Scripture Say? What is it?**
   1. **Controversial. Church silent. Scripture silent.** Firm where scripture is firm, flexible where it is flexible, right? (Deuteronomy 23:10, nocturnal emission, “wet dream”)
   2. **Definition:** Masturbation is physically stimulating oneself for sexual excitement and/or orgasm.
   3. **Spiritual battle of the flesh & mind**—corruption of one of the greatest physical pleasures meant to push you towards oneness and mutual pleasure with a spouse, to become self-centered/self-indulgent. Misuses one of God’s greatest gifts (imagination) to turn you inward, isolated. Incentivized with powerful chemical releases in the reward center of the brain.
3. **Myths:**
   1. **I am the only one who struggles with this.** Men and women struggle with this. (1 Cor 10:13, Heb 4:13))
   2. **“I’ll quit when I get married**.” You are sowing seeds for your future.
   3. **I have to masturbate or it will harm my body**. Your body adjusts! You won’t shrivel up like a raisin.
   4. **It’s ok to masturbate if I don’t lust**. That’s how you create a fetish!
   5. **It’s never ok to masturbate**. There may be times when permissible/beneficial, but these are exceptions. Litmus test later.
   6. **It’s no big deal. It doesn’t harm anyone. There are no victims…**
4. **The Damage of Masturbation:**
5. **It harms the object of your attention**. Sexualize someone or something. People into objects. Objects into stimulants.
6. **It harms you**
   * 1. Fellowship with God. 1 John 1:6, “If we say we have fellowship…” Prevents God from being our comfort.
     2. Masturbation can be addictive. Laying pathways for dealing with life. The neurotransmitter Dopamine that is our reward center in the brain is the same released with a number of chemical addictions…cocaine, heroin, alcohol, etc.
     3. Corrupts your imagination: Misuses our imagination. Escaping to a fantasy stunts your emotional, relational, growth and hinders your ability to live in the real world  
          
        “For me the real evil of masturbation would be that it takes an appetite [sex] which, in lawful use, leads the individual out of himself to complete…his own personality in that of another…and turns it back: sending the man back into the prison of himself, there to keep a harem of imaginary brides. And this harem, once admitted, works against his ever getting out and really uniting with a real woman. For the harem is always accessible, always subservient, calls for no sacrifice or adjustments, and can be endowed with erotic and psychological attractions which no real woman can rival. Among these shadowy brides he is always adored, always the perfect lover: no demand is made on his unselfishness, no mortification is ever imposed on his vanity. In the end, they become merely the medium through which he increasingly adores himself.” C.S. Lewis
7. **It harms you and your spouse**. Isolation. Excludes him/her from your sexuality. Brings people outside your marriage into it sexually. Robs you of emotional/sexual intimacy with your spouse (or future spouse). Personal example: Fantasy women as conquests, a way to affirm my manhood. Rather than connect with Teresa…what made me aggressive sexually as a single, makes me passive in marriage.
8. **Ashley’s Story**
9. **Master of Your Domain.** Helpful realizations to gain victory over masturbation.
10. **Realize who is Master of Your Domain.** Your body is not your own.
    * 1. **God made you to glorify Him with your body.** For those who have trusted Christ, body is now a temple

Romans 1:24-25, “…*God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.”*1 Corinthians 6:19-20, *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body”.*

* + 1. **Your body belongs to your spouse**. 1 Corinthians 7:4, “*For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.”*

1. **Recall that life within God’s design is best.**
   * 1. **Sexual desire is meant to push us towards oneness, mutual pleasure and service to one another that produces life**.   
        1 Corinthians 7:5, *“[Spouses,] Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”*
     2. **Building intimacy with your spouse starts when you are single.** Not cluttering your mind with destructive thoughts (your baggage comes with you). Learning bodily discipline, and trust/obey/relying on God to sustain you and to meet your needs are practices that begin today that will spare your marriage.
     3. **If you’ve blown it, there is grace with Christ.** God can renew your mind. Surrender to God. He can transform you.
2. **Recall that this struggle is common.** You are not alone. (1 Corinthians 10:13). Victory is possible.
   * 1. **Don’t let shame keep you in the dark**. Live in the light. Confess, repent, ask others to hold you accountable.
     2. **Mother’s don’t shame your kids**. Address problems, but don’t freak out. **Dad’s take the opportunity to teach** and train your children in godliness.
     3. **Victory is possible**… Galatians 5:16, *“…walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”*
        + 1. Nate’s victory… over 11 years (only a handful of times since I first confessed to Teresa in 2000). As a single when I was walking with the Lord, I went 1.5 years.
3. **View temptation as an opportunity to be transformed** by the renewing of your mind.
   * 1. **Opportunity to be dependent.** Ask God for help. Memorize scripture. (Gal 5:16, Gal 6:7, 1 Cor 10:13, Col 3:2)
     2. **Opportunity for self-examination and vulnerability.** Is there something driving me to escape to a fantasy? Should you express needs/desires to move towards oneness with your spouse? Or vulnerable with community about failures and desire to cope with life?
     3. **Opportunity to be faithful to your spouse or a future spouse** by keeping your mind healthy and uncluttered.
     4. **Opportunity to be faithful to God. Trust and obey in order to glorify God through self-control.**   
        1 Corinthians 10:31, *“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*   
          
        **Litmus test**…Is this activity glorifying to God. If Jesus were to return would he say “Well done?”  
          
        You can consider if it is permissible and beneficial. Not a decision to make in isolation. Seek godly counsel.
4. Closing

Honor God with your body. His design is intended to bless you not rob you of pleasure. Glorify him in all that you do. Set your mind and heart on the things above. When face temptation draw close to Him and invite others to know you.

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”* (Philippians 4:8)