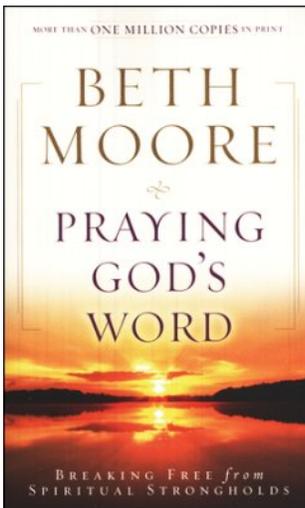


Overcoming Sexual Strongholds by Beth Moore.



Satan has done a masterful job of shaming those who are caught in sexual strongholds into a continuous cycle of defeat. He seduces, then he shames, keeping his eye steadfastly on the goal of scandal. Let's reiterate that Satan cannot take our salvation from us, so he does everything he can do to steal, kill, and destroy our character, testimony, and effectiveness. Defeated Christians work far more effectively in Satan's scheme to undermine the church than successful non-Christians ever will!

None of us will question that he is having a field day in our present generation in the area of sexual strongholds. Satan's attacks on sexuality have become so outright and blatant that we are becoming frighteningly desensitized and are unknowingly readjusting the plumb line to a state of relativity. In other words, instead of measuring our lives against the goal of Christlikeness, we are beginning to subconsciously measure our lives against the world's depravity. We can point to any amount of trash heaps around us and say, "I'll never be as bad as that."

First of all, let's be sure to state that sexual intimacy is an absolute gift from God to a husband and wife for their mutual joy and satisfaction. Most of us realize that sex itself is not the problem. It's what we're doing with it beyond its stated purpose that becomes the problem. Incalculable numbers of believers suffer from sexual strongholds. Even believers who really want to live victoriously often find themselves in what Neil Anderson, author of *The Bondage Breaker*, calls "the trap of 'sin-confess, sin-confess.'" Many who fall back and forth into sexual sin are extremely remorseful about their actions, and suffer terrible guilt, But can't seem to avoid falling back into the trap.

We'd be extremely naïve to think that sexual immorality is limited to the defeated single. Not only are extramarital affairs rampant, but couples who are physically monogamous may be far from emotionally and mentally monogamous. Christ blew the door off marriage as an assumed impenetrable fortress against sexual immorality with **Matthew 5:27**: "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Alarming numbers of believing couples have unhealthy marriages because sexual perversion and pornography have entered the home under the guise of "spicing things up." God can spice things up.

What's this stuff all about, anyway? Why do sexual strongholds seem to be some of Satan's specialties?

- *Satan desires to undermine the sanctifying work of Christ.* He knows that all believers have been "set apart" from the unclean to the clean, and from the unholy to the holy. He also knows that when believers act like the sanctified people they are, God is released to do powerful wonders among them. (**Joshua 3:5**) No purity—no power. Satan is a fool but he's no dummy.
- *Satan knows the overwhelming effects of sexual sin.* We must resist "ranking" sin since every sin causes us to miss the mark and require grace. All sin is equal in the sense of eternal ramifications, but not all sin is equal in its earthly ramifications.

Satan knows that sexual sin is unique in its attack and impact on the body of the individual believer. **1 Corinthians 6:18-19** says, “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” Since the Spirit of Christ now dwells in the temple of believers’ bodies, getting a Christian engaged in sexual sin is the closest thing Satan can come to personally assaulting Christ.

- *Sexual engagement forms a soul tie that was meant for marriage alone.* **1 Corinthians 6:13-16**. Says, “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord. And the Lord for the body. By His power God raised the Lord from the dead, and He will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself to a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, ‘The two shall become one flesh.’” These scriptures tell us that when we engage in any realm of sexual intimacy with someone beside our marriage partner, we are tying ourselves to them. The original Greek word for “unites” in this verse is *kollao* meaning “to glue together, to make cohere.” In other words, it can form a soul tie that is absolutely out of the will of God and must be renounced severely in order for such surrendered ground to be reclaimed.

So, is there any hope of earthly recovery, or are we doomed to be defeated by the excess baggage and emptiness that wrong relationships left behind? The believer in Christ *always* has hope, but God means for hope to become a vivid reality through complete restoration. We are called to some radical responses with guaranteed results: we must repent wholeheartedly, receive the Lord’s loving discipline, and cooperate fully with His plan for recovery. The process can be hard, painful, and somewhat lengthy *because we have to allow God to remove all the broken remnants of the ties to the ungodly relationship and fill in the holes with His loving Spirit until we are smooth and whole*. No matter how hard, the resulting freedom will be worth it. Incidentally, someone who has had many sexual partners may be thinking, *I don’t have soul ties to any of them. I don’t give them a second thought*. Please understand that you may be in one of the most binding sexual strongholds of all because you have completely segregated your emotions and are not only abusing your own body, but others’ too. I speak the truth to you in love, not judgement. You are in a serious situation, and heavy-duty consequences are no doubt pending. Please seek God and ask Him to heal you and give you appropriate godly sorrow so that you can be set free. You are being terribly but successfully deceived.

- *Sexual sin is highly habitual and addictive, so it has the long-term effects Satan prefers*. He is many things, but he is not very creative. He much prefers a long lasting yoke to the flimsier brand. Satan uses the same thing over and over as long as he’s getting results.
- *In 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, the apostle Paul expressed the heart of God in his desire that the Church be presented to Christ as a “pure virgin to Him.”* He went on to say, “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.” What better way to get people who are supposed to be presented as pure virgins to Christ?

I have wonderful news for every person who says, "It's too late for me! I gave up my virginity years ago!" Only in Christ Jesus, our Merciful Redeemer and Blessed Hope, can we regain our virginity. No, not physically. But emotionally. We can also allow Him to set apart these bodies that He has chosen to be the temple of the Holy Spirit henceforth to be sanctified, clean vessels. Not only is this possible, *this is God's will!*

Ceasing outward behavior is a huge step in the right direction, but we can't stop there. **Isaiah 1:16-17** says, "Stop doing wrong, learn to do what is right." In other words, God's Word tells us to follow up the cessation of sinful actions by learning how to live righteously.

No matter what kind of sexual stronghold you seek to overcome, God's remedy is His truth. As you pray and claim these scriptures through truth even when you still feel the lie. Even state out loud when possible, "God, I know what Your Word says is true, even though I still have feelings to the contrary. Your Word will remain the same, but my feelings will change."

You can do it, believer, because God will do it through you if you'll let Him. Give Him *time* and *truth* and there's nothing He can't do. Reject Satan's lies that you cannot be free. Don't you see? He is afraid of you! He is afraid of what you will become and the power of your testimony if God sets you free.

WARNING: The moment the enemy sees that you are becoming serious about being delivered from ANY stronghold and being freed to pursue Holiness, he will turn up the heat of temptation. Be alert and stand against him; however, if you happen to fall, seek forgiveness and get back on the freedom trail. Remember, God desires to completely renew our thinking and change our habits. It's a process that takes time. God is not expecting totally unblemished earthy perfection. His Son alone filled that requirement. He is looking for hearts in constant pursuit of Him and His righteousness. Long-term victory results from many short-termed victories that collide, forming new habits.

In his excellent book, *The Bondage Breaker*, Neil Anderson stresses the importance of renouncing past sins and strongholds. He urges those who have struggled against sexual strongholds to earnestly pray the following:

Lord, I renounce all these uses of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness and by doing so ask You to break all bondage that Satan has brought into my life through that involvement. I confess my participation. I now present my body to You as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to You, and I reserve the sexual use of my body for marriage. I renounce the lie of Satan that that my body is not clean, that it is dirty or in any way unacceptable as a result of my past sexual experiences. Lord I thank You that You have totally cleansed and forgiven me, that You love and accept me unconditionally. Therefore, I can accept myself. And I choose to do so, to accept myself and my body as cleansed. In Jesus name. Amen.



"I'm continually amazed with my own failures. But the wonder of it all is that God keeps working on me and through me anyway. I'm convinced He has worked more through my failures than my successes. I'm so grateful that the Bible is packed with failures who became champions of the faith; the Peters, the Davids, the Moseses, the John

Marks, and the Jonahs. Their stories show me that God isn't looking at our achievements but at us—and that even my failures can be used for His ultimate glory.” (Tim Mark, *Holy Sweat*).

“Have enough faith, dear reader, to believe that you need mercy. Mercy is not there for those who think they have merited it. Such people seek justice, not mercy. Only the guilty need and seek mercy. Believe that God delights in mercy, delights to give grace, where it cannot be deserved, delights to forgive where there can be no reason for forgiveness when there is no reason for forgiveness but His own goodness. Believe also that the Lord Jesus Christ is the incarnation of mercy. His very existence is mercy to You. His every Word means mercy. His life, His death, His intercession in heaven, all mean mercy, mercy, mercy, nothing but mercy...He is the Savior for you.” (Charles Spurgeon, *Spurgeon on Prayer and Spiritual Warfare*)

“Why do I share my testimony? For several reasons. When God gave me the gift of life, I believe He coupled with it the desire to share my freedom with others. If I had known there was hope for those struggling with homosexuality, I would have sought it long before I did! I could never withhold salvation and hope from anyone, even though it means the regular sharing of my own deepest wounds and failures. Like Jesus, I was called to lay down my life and my reputation that others might see what redemption looks like.” (Danny Jernigan, *This Is My Destiny*)

“In the Kingdom, there are no great men of God, just humble men whom God has chosen to use greatly. How do we know when we are humble? **When God speaks, we tremble.** God is looking for a man who trembles at His Word. Such a man will find the spirit of God resting on him; he will become a dwelling place for the Almighty. (Francis Frangipane, *Holiness, Truth and the Presence of God*)

Scripture References

Romans 7:15-21 *I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.*

And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.

Romans 7:22-25 *I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.*

Psalms 139:1-3 *O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do.*

1 John 1:9 *But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

Psalm 139:13-14 *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.*

Jeremiah 32:17 *“O Sovereign LORD! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!”*

1 John 3:7-8 *Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.*

1 John 3:9 *Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God.*

1 John 3:19 *Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God.*

1 Corinthians 6:13-15 *You say, “Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food.” (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can't say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead.*

Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.*

1 Corinthians 5:5 *Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns.*

Romans 1:24-25 *So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.*

Romans 2:5-10 *But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will judge everyone according to what they have done. He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness. There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.*

Romans 5:8 *But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

Romans 6:11-14 *So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.*

Romans 6:16 *Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.*

Romans 6:17-18 *Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.*

Romans 6:19 *Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.*

Romans 6:21-23 *And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:5 *Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.*

Romans 8:5-6, *Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.*

Romans 8:33-34, 37 *Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.*

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, *Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Hebrews 10:10 *For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.*

Colossians 2:13-15 *You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.*

Colossians 3:1 *Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand.*

Jeremiah 17:9 *"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"*

Colossians 3:5 *So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.*

Philippians 4:6 *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*

Psalms 62:8 *O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge. Interlude*

1 Corinthians 10:13 *The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

Psalms 119:9-11 *How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. I have tried hard to find you—don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

Psalms 119:37, 39 *Turn my eyes from worthless things, and give me life through your word. Help me abandon my shameful ways; for your regulations are good.*

Psalms 119:66-68 *I believe in your commands; now teach me good judgment and knowledge. I used to wander off until you disciplined me; but now I closely follow your word. You are good and do only good; teach me your decrees.*

Proverbs 2:8 *He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him.*

Proverbs 3:11-12 *My child, don't reject the LORD's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you.¹² For the LORD corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.*

Proverbs 3:33 *The LORD curses the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the upright.*

Proverbs 3:32 *Such wicked people are detestable to the LORD, but he offers his friendship to the godly.*

Proverbs 4:23-24 *Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech.*

Proverbs 4:25-27 *Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil*

Proverbs 5:21-23, *For the LORD sees clearly what a man does, examining every path he takes. An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his great foolishness.*

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

Mark 12:30, *"...And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength."*

Mark 12:31 *"The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."*

Philippians 4:8-9 *And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.*

Proverbs 20:9 *Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart; I am pure and free from sin”?*

Psalms 51:10, 12 *Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.*

2 Corinthians 11:2-3 *For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband—Christ. But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent.*

Hebrews 4:14-16 *So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

Hebrews 5:14 *Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.*

Hebrews 10:21-23 *And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.*

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.

1 Peter 2:1-2 *So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment.*

1 Peter 2:24-25 *He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.*

Ephesians 1:20 *that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.*

Galatians 2:20 *My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*