

Our Friend, the Enemy

 help4families.com/our-friend-the-enemy

NOTE: The following is an excerpt from a letter to a man who is in the process of making a break with the self-destructive sexual addiction called transsexualism. I hope it will help clarify some things in your heart and mind.

I have spent quite a bit of time praying over your letter of January 14th and your questions. I want at all times to be entirely honest in my communication with you, holding out to you HOPE for resolution, but the reality that it doesn't come quickly, cheaply, or within the context of isolation.

That is why I am so pleased to learn that you have discovered a church that ministers to such needs as your own. I am anxious to find out the name of the contact person in that outreach for future reference. Breaking the secret is such a large part of the overall healing process. I would encourage you to persist in finding those whom you can trust with your inner pain . . . and then let all the junk spill out.

Such a group (or individual) is not just there to be the retainer of our "garbage," but to be a daily resource for prayer, input, course correction and, in a real sense, "Jesus with skin on." They can be the ones to whom you can turn for encouragement and personal accountability when tempted to do what you know is not in your best interest. It's amazing how the nuclear warhead of lust is so easily diffused by a simple telephone call to someone who knows all about us. It helps so much to be able to say, "Hey, I am in big trouble in my mind right now . . . how about agreeing in prayer for me?" Accountability is so vital to any success!

I heard once that "Sin carries you further than you ever wanted to go. You pay a price far more than you wanted to pay. And you stay much longer than you intended to stay!" That's especially true with you and me . . . and others like us!

You and I have very similar histories in our search for help. It is not an easy thing to find the help we need, because it takes time and a sort of "plodding along" in that tedious, humiliating and sometimes frustrating thing called RECOVERY. As Dr. Boyd Luter puts it in his book, *Looking Back, Moving On*

"The hardest part of this process (of healing past hurts) was admitting that I couldn't do it alone. A substantial part of my life was interned within me, and I didn't really have a clue to unlocking that internal vault in search of answers. Through the gracious help of colleagues, I was able to receive assistance from a few key individuals who encouraged me to unearth my early experiences and helped draw out a route map for the recovery journey ahead . . . So, at the same time that I was digging down into my past to identify the issues that had been impacting me, I was digging down into Scriptures with a team of others to identify how the Bible spoke to those issues."¹

Dr. Luter continued to say, "Recovery is the comeback process from an unhealthy event, relationship, or behavioral pattern that continues to impact a person's life in negative ways."² That's what you and I are involved in. And there's lots of events, people and behaviors that we need to more effectively deal with, preferably with others who can and will stand with us in our quest for sexual-identity wholeness.

A good friend of mine recently told me, "Jay, the entire strategy of Satan is to lure you and those you work with into a disinterest in your destiny in God; to keep your focus upon the yourself and the ever-pressing immediate, not the future God has planned for you."

You may have a copy of *The Best of Peter Marshall*, written by his wife, Catherine. If so, pick it up and read his classic sermon entitled, "Our Friend, The Enemy." He parallels the life of Samson to our own, asserting that God's purposes for Samson were far more splendid than he realized. Peter Marshall said of Samson,

For any of us . . . the temptation is to put ourselves first, at the center of life, to play at being God. `I want what I

want.' My will—or God's will. In this case, God had a great plan for Samson: "He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." (Judges 13:5) More than that, he was meant to be a Nazirite . . . His body was to be kept clean of strong drink and sensual indulgence . . . No razor was ever to touch his head. But the human will is always free. God will force no man to obey Him, nor will He shield any from temptation. The sin is not in being tempted but in yielding. This is our battleground, where every human being faces a decision between God and the devil.

The devil came to Samson in a woman's guise; he often has and he often does. So Samson lost his first battle with temptation—and we can be sure that it was a battle. For God, having blessed Samson with unusual gifts, needed him. There had to be a tremendous battle within, particularly that first time. But after the first giving-in to temptation, our defenses are weaker the next time. We have handed over our wills to the Evil Power, fraternized with him like the friend he pretends to be. He has won control. His sly suggestions infiltrate. . .then contaminate . . .then dominate.

And so the man who with his bare hands had torn a lion limb from limb was victim of a snakebite in the tall grass of sensual indulgence. The argument that desire alone is sufficient excuse for conduct is a philosophy as old as sex. The unbridling of passion. . .the exaltation of sexual pleasures torn from the context of life and worshiped as the god of happiness—this rationale has been given a fresh Freudian face in our century; otherwise there is nothing modern about it.

The temptation is always to purchase popularity by joining the crowd around the bargain counters of hell, when in exchange for an irrecoverable, fragile, precious thing—purity—the devil will offer cheap, glittering baubles with which his hooks are baited.³

Excellent material, wouldn't you say? If you haven't read the book, it's time to seriously consider doing so. He gives a great deal more insight than what I have space to include in this letter.

You said that you were not expecting me to give you a "formula," some magical prescription to provide the cure-all remedy. Good! Cause I cannot! All I can do is offer to you those things that are helpful to me (and others) in our ongoing recovery process.

Here are some things you must do ASAP for your recovery: 1. Empty your soul of all anger with God. 2. Make a daily commitment to open everything about yourself to God and the people He sends your way. 3. Employ battle strategies when temptations come your way, for they surely do and will! (We have been so accustomed to laying down our battle gear, succumbing at the slightest suggestion, and forsaking the Lord's way of obedience, for the immediate, compulsive drive for immoral means of self-gratification) 4. Purpose to know Jesus better and love Him with all your heart. 5. Become firmly committed to an accountability group. 6. Call upon others when first experiencing temptation. 7. Keep yourself out of situations that lend themselves to stirring up old thoughts and feelings. Of this drive for immediate satisfaction, Peter Marshall says:

But the truth is that the devil has no bargains. "Take what you want, Samson. We can settle up later." One of the devil's tricks is this: When we choose evil, usually we get what we want at once and pay for it afterward. When we choose good we have to pay for it first before we get it. Most of us have found this out with as simple a matter as examinations in school. If you chose good grades and a degree with honor, you had to pay months ago with hard study, the giving up of some pleasure or recreation. But if you chose to have a good time, you began that long ago, and you have had your fun. You did not pay then, but you are paying now in your frantic, last-minute boning for your exams, and your paying is not over yet. There will be further deferred payments later in your life.

Make no mistake about it. This Evil Personality is very real and very subtle. He is real to me; I know him well. He wants to persuade us to choose the things that we do not have to pay for right away. Usually they are cheap and sordid things. "You want it," the devil says. "Charge it. I understand. I'm your friend. Take what you want."

But the bills always come due. And what is more, they are not all presented to you. Payments must also be made by

those close to you, bound to you through all eternity by ties of blood and bonds of love.⁴

Well, I have taken enough of your time in this exchange. I know that you can make it through all of this stuff. We are in this together. I am anything but perfect or without temptation, but I am learning what it takes to stay on the right course, doing the correct things, making the right decisions. I am always growing in my self understanding and comprehending more of what God has for me, which is always good! (Jeremiah 29:11) I am also incredibly aware of my weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

With that, I am also daily committed to traverse this thing called “recovery,” not just for myself . . .but for God’s purposes. And for you.

I am glad to have you walking beside me!

Footnotes: 1. Dr. Boyd Luter, *Looking Back, Moving On*, (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1993), 15. 2. *Ibid.*, 19 3. Catherine Marshall, *The Best of Peter Marshall*, (New York: Zondervan Publishing, 1983), 246-247. 4. *Ibid.*, 247-248.