

THE RESULTS OF NEGLECT

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**Lasciviousness:
The Results
of
Neglect**

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Introduction

"Just tell me how to get out of this situation!"

That's a cry I hear from desperate believers from one end of this country to the other. Most Christians today find themselves locked in some sort of dilemma-a circumstance or habit in which they feel trapped.

More often than not, I find the root cause of this trouble is an addiction the Bible calls lasciviousness.

Lasciviousness is an old, King James English word which means "wantonness" or "negligence of restraint." That's precisely the problem for many Christians.

When they try to say "no" to over-eating, they have no restraint. When they try to break the pornography habit-no restraint. When they try to get control of their tongues-no restraint.

Lasciviousness can manifest itself in any area of your life-spending, talking, eating, thinking or working. Any area in which you seem to have little or no self-control is an area in

which lasciviousness is creating problems for you. Make no mistake about it, lasciviousness is deadly. It will rob you of power, leave you open to attacks of the devil and make you totally ineffective as a Christian. It will block God's ability to give you His best in your life.

In the next few pages, we'll open the scriptures and discover what God's Word has to say about lasciviousness. You'll learn how to recognize it in your own life. Even better, you'll learn how to overcome it and become the blessed, spiritually powerful person God has destined you to become.

Chapter 1

Lose the Weight

Have you ever felt the pressure to sin or indulge in a habit you knew was ungodly. "Pressure" is the correct word. Temptation is literally a form of "pressure" on your flesh. That's how the Bible describes it.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

Notice that it says, "lay aside every weight and the sin...." Weight always exerts pressure. Here, the Word describes the temptation to sin as a form of pressure on the flesh. You can probably relate to that description. All of us have felt that pressure on our flesh at one time or another.

The reason so many Christians have trouble with sin, is that they never "lay aside the weight" of temptation. They think they can play with fire and not get burned.

A good example of this is the person who is

struggling with the sin of lust, yet still thinks he can dabble in pornography without getting into bondage to it. He keeps the pressure (weight) on his flesh. That pressure always results in slavery to sin.

Often a drug addict will get saved and delivered from the habit, but still continue to associate with drug users. This person invariably ends up back on drugs. Why? They never laid aside the weight.

Child of God, a habit doesn't start off as a habit. It begins with you totally in control. But as you continue in that sin, ultimately it comes to control you.

What is the alternative to buckling under the weight of temptation. We find the answer in the very next verse, Hebrews 12:2:

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

There is the prescription for laying aside the weight of temptation. "Looking unto Jesus..."

The thing that dominates your attention is going to be the thing that has power in your life. If you spend your day thinking about food, food

is going to control you. But if you spend your day focusing on Jesus, His desires are going to dominate the desires of your flesh.

How do you look unto Jesus? One way is to give attention to His Word. Jesus is "the Word made flesh." (John 1:14) When you read and meditate upon God's Word, you are "looking unto Jesus."

Each day, you are involved in a mental war. The sooner you realize that, the sooner you are going to start winning some of the battles you're facing.

Satan and his demons will attack you right between your ears. Their weapons are suggestions, thoughts and ideas. The ultimate goal is to get you into deception.

Why is deception the devil's objective? Because he must deceive you in order to change your destiny.

God's destiny for you is blessing, authority and dominion over the circumstances of life. God has a unique and exciting plan for you. It's a plan in which you fully utilize all the gifts, talents and characteristics which he placed in you.

The only way Satan can prevent you from realizing your full potential in Christ is to get you into deception. He must make you think that

you are headed in the right direction when you are not. This battle occurs in the mind.

The mind is part of the soulish realm. Your soul is comprised of your mind, your will and your emotions. Demonic powers are spirit-beings, but you don't fight them in your spirit. They want to influence your flesh, but you don't fight them in your flesh.

No, this battle will be won or lost in your mind-the soulish part of you.

This is why it is so vital that you give your attention to Jesus and His Word. Looking unto Jesus focuses your mind on the light of God's Word and keeps you free from deception. Then and only then will you be able to realize God's destiny for your life.

"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; " is one of the most powerful things you can do in your battle against lasciviousness. Why? Because it feeds and strengthens your spirit.

When your spirit is strong, it is able to guide you and keep you from making tragic mistakes.

It's like a car equipped for driver's training. The student driver has all the controls on the left side of the car. However, the instructor also has a set of controls on the right side that permit him to override a student that is about to get into

trouble.

Ordinarily your mind will set your course throughout the day, but your spirit, if it is strong, can step in and override your natural mind if you're about to take a dangerous wrong turn. It is those wrong turns that ultimately lead to the bondage of lasciviousness.

Tragically, few Christians ever strengthen their spirits enough to ever enjoy the benefit of this safety mechanism.

Chapter 2

Plant the Right Seeds

One night as I was studying this subject at my desk, the Lord spoke to my spirit and delivered a startling message. He said, "Son, the key to Satan's operation is also the key to my operation."

"What do you mean Lord?" I said in shock. "Seed planting," was his answer. "Both my kingdom and Satan's kingdom operate on the seed principle. We -simply use different seed."

As I thought about this, I realized the truth of what the Lord had said. In Genesis 1:12 God establishes this principle:

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after its kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after its kind: and God saw that it was good.

Like begets like. Kind produces more of its own kind. This is an unchangeable law of the universe. Another such law states that if you plant a seed under the right conditions, it will grow. There's no getting around it. It's based upon a promise from Almighty God Himself.

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. (Genesis 8:22)

As long as the earth remains, planting seeds will result in a harvest. That not only applies to natural plant seeds, but also to spiritual seed as well.

Actions plant seeds. Those seeds always result in a harvest. No person is ever born a homosexual. Actions plant the seeds. You don't emerge from the womb a glutton, alcoholic or lazy. Those lifestyles represent a harvest of seeds planted in the past. Scripture is very clear on this point.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Galatians 6:7,8)

Just what is the harvest that results from sowing to the flesh? The Apostle Paul spells that out in the preceding chapter of Galatians.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication,

uncleanness, lasciviousness... (Galatians 5:19)

Paul goes on to lay out a long list of evil. But notice what was number four on the list—lasciviousness.

Lasciviousness is the foundation and starting point of all kinds of destructive behavior. In the following chapters you'll see why.

Chapter 3

No Restraint

You'll remember that the definition of lasciviousness is "negligence of restraint." It refers to a life that is unrestrained.

This type of bondage doesn't spring up overnight. Nobody wakes up one morning and decides to throw off all control over their appetites and desires. It is a process which occurs over time.

Lasciviousness takes many forms. It can manifest itself in the appetite for food. It can take the form of lust. Sometimes it appears as the inability to control one's words, such as cursing.

Although lasciviousness shows itself differently in different individuals, it almost always has its source in one place-the physical appetites.

Appetites deal with more than just food. There are physical appetites for sex, approval, success, comfort, revenge and many other things.

No matter what form it takes, lasciviousness always results in a person losing the ability to control their behavior. I've heard people who are addicted to cigarettes jokingly say, "Quitting

smoking is easy. I've done it many times."

What they mean is they have purposed to quit many times. They've thrown those cigarettes in the trash and said "No more." Yet they always run out and buy another pack within a few days-sometimes within hours.

Perhaps you've struggled with overeating. How many diets have you tried? Dozens? Hundreds? You can go on every diet ever dreamed of, but if your root problem is lasciviousness, you're going to do nothing but gain weight until you deal with it.

The door to lasciviousness is always opened at your flesh's weakest point. For one person the weak point is food. For another, it may be pornography, cursing, anger, stealing, lying or any of a thousand other vices.

Whatever your weak point is, that's the place lasciviousness is going to try to enter and dominate your life. If it is successful, you will ultimately be rendered spiritually impotent and totally ineffective as a Christian.

Through lasciviousness, your flesh can come to dominate your spirit so completely, that you feel helpless to control your actions at all.

Your system was never meant to be dominated or controlled by your flesh. God did not create it that way.

Let's use the example of food once again since so many Christians struggle in this area. By the way, this should not come as any surprise to us. The appetite for food is the basis for more human failure and lasciviousness than any other thing.

The appetite for food was the point of entry Satan used with Adam and Eve to get them to rebel against God. It was also the first temptation the devil threw at Jesus in the wilderness. "Turn these stones into bread."

Why was food the primary point of attack with both the first Adam (who fell) and the Last Adam (who overcame)? It's not because hunger is evil. The sensation of hunger is a God-given part of our physical makeup. It's designed to remind us to provide our bodies with the nourishment they need to keep going.

Satan's tactic is to pervert that good and natural appetite for food into a strong sensual craving. If he can get us to put satisfying the physical appetite for food above our spiritual desire for the things of God, he knows we're on the road to lasciviousness.

That's why Jesus' response to temptation in the wilderness was to quote scripture, and not just any scripture:

But he answered and said, It is written, Man

shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Jesus knew that he needed food to survive. But He understood that it could not come before His hunger for the Word of God. Many of us have placed the gratification of our physical appetites above our appetite for God's Word for so long, that lasciviousness has taken root.

As I have stated however, this doesn't happen overnight. It's a process. We'll examine that progression in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Road to Lasciviousness

How does a person go from being a fairly disciplined person to one who is dominated by lasciviousness? Paul provides a clue to that mystery in Ephesians 4:17-19:

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

In the final analysis, there is only one way that lasciviousness can come to dominate you. It's because you have given yourself over to it.

Nobody is ever blind-sided by lasciviousness. It comes through a series of choices—choices only you can make.

This verse also gives us the results of lasciviousness. It enables you "to work all uncleanness with greediness." Another word for

greediness is "selfishness." Lasciviousness is always driven by selfishness. "My wants," "My appetites," "My desires." These are the motivating forces that move you down the road to lasciviousness.

The Christian, on the other hand, is called to a life of selflessness. It is when we deny ourselves and put God's program and the needs of others above our own that we give God the freedom to bless us as He wants.

Where does this whole process start? With a thought. A little insignificant thought not dealt with can become a thought pattern. A thought pattern can become a habit. A habit opens the door to the deadly force of lasciviousness.

The Bible gives us some clear indications of the importance of thoughts:

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (II Corinthians 10:5)

Imaginations and thoughts are much more powerful than most people suspect. They are seeds. And as we saw in a previous chapter, seeds always grow into something much bigger.

Allow an evil thought to remain in your

mind uncaptured and it will soon spring to life. I've heard people say, "Come Pastor, a little fantasizing never hurt anyone. After all it's not like I'd really do it."

Those people are deceived. Thoughts always lead to actions. Spend enough time imagining yourself doing a certain thing, and eventually the devil will give you an opportunity to act out your fantasy.

At that point, you're as good as gone. You have no ability to resist because you've already been there in your mind. You've developed an inner image of yourself doing that thing.

"But Pastor Dollar, how can I keep thoughts from entering my mind?"

You can't. It's what you do with them after they pop in there that makes all the difference.

Brother Kenneth E. Hagin, Jr. tells the story about a lady who came up to him after a service for prayer. She said, "Brother Hagin, please pray for me that I won't have any more bad thoughts."

He replied, "Lady, if I could pray that for you, I'd pray it for myself! You can't keep certain thoughts from entering your mind, but you don't have to let them stay there."

As Brother Hagin says, "You can't keep a bird from flying over your head, but you can keep him from building a nest in your hair."

When a thought contrary to the Word of God pops into your mind, take it captive. Say, "Hold it right there. You're trespassing in my mind. You don't belong here and I'm placing you under arrest."

Then replace that thought with the Word of God. That's how Jesus battled thoughts placed in His mind by Satan when He was being tempted in the wilderness.

Every time the devil placed a suggestion in Jesus' mind, he immediately rejected it and replaced it with something from the Word.

Failure to do that very thing resulted in sin and death entering the world.

When the serpent came to Eve, he came armed with a single thought. Her failure to cast down that thought and substitute it for what God had said, resulted in the fall of mankind.

The entire sin age began with an improper thought that was not cast down.

Child of God, the seeds of lasciviousness begin in your mind but they don't remain there. After taking root in your thinking, they quickly move on to their next fertile breeding ground—your mouth.

According to James 3:2, a person who is able to control what they say, is a person who can control their whole body.

The reciprocal of that truth is; you're never going to be able to take control of your flesh until you can bridle your tongue.

After beginning in your mind and moving to your mouth, the ultimate manifestation of lasciviousness occurs in your actions. This is the unchangeable pattern.

First you think it, then you talk it, eventually you will do it.

To overcome lasciviousness you're going to have to short circuit that destructive pattern. Read on to find out how.

Chapter 5

Countering Lasciviousness

We've seen what a destructive force lasciviousness can be. But did you know there is a spiritual force that is the opposite of lasciviousness? There is. It's called temperance.

While lasciviousness is a work of the flesh, temperance is a fruit of the Spirit:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..., temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Galatians 5:22-24

As you can see, temperance is a force that will enable you to control the appetites of your flesh. That's why it is such a powerful weapon against lasciviousness.

The temperate man or woman is a person with a body that is under control of the spirit. That's what Paul is saying in I Corinthians 9:24-27:

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that

striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Here we see that temperance is a means of keeping your body in subjection. You control it, instead of it controlling you.

How do you develop temperance? There are basically two ways.

First, you must get control of your mouth. As we saw in the previous chapter, this is a major key to getting control of your flesh:

For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a

little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell (James 3:2-6)

Obviously, God's Word has some pretty strong things to say regarding the power of the tongue.

The second key to developing temperance is to strengthen your inner man through the study of and meditation on God's Word.

These are things which strengthen your spirit just as surely as weight training will strengthen your body. When the desires of your flesh come into conflict with the desires of your spirit, the strongest force is going to prevail.

To develop temperance, make sure your spirit is the one that's going to get the upper hand. How do you do that? By putting an end to neglect.

Stop neglecting God's Word. Stop neglecting prayer. Stop neglecting church attendance. Stop neglecting those things which produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

The Bible says it very plainly, "If you will walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfill the lusts of

the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)

When you walk in faith and walk in the Word, you are going to be walking in the Spirit. Neglect these things and you've opened the door to lasciviousness.

Lasciviousness is the result of neglect. Stop the neglect and you'll open the door to a life of freedom and power you've never imagined possible.

Chapter 6

Scripture-Based Confession for Overcoming Lasciviousness

In the name of Jesus, I will walk in the Spirit and therefore not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Because I consider Jesus, I will not get weary or faint mentally.

I am not going to allow the devil to deceive me and change my destiny. My destiny is with Jesus. I know my fight is against spiritual forces of darkness. But greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.

I am going to plant seeds in my mind from God's seed bag, the Bible. It will produce a spiritual harvest.

God's law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. I declare I am the head and not the tail. I'm getting off of the roller coaster ride of sin. The sin age is over in my life.

I turn my whole being-spirit, soul and body—over to God. I cast my cares upon Him because he cares for me.

I am a faith person. I walk by faith. I speak by faith. I am what the Word says I am. I can do

everything the Word says I can do.

Since I am an overcomer and more than a conqueror, I am breaking free of all ungodly habits. I am coming out of all unrighteous dilemmas. I am coming out of neglect.

I am taking heed to the great salvation that has been presented to me. I am a worthy example of Jesus Christ. I am not a hypocrite. I am a born-again, fire-baptized, Holy Ghost-filled, Bible-toting, devil-stomping, diligent, committed, anointed Christian.

I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. The desires of my reborn spirit dominate the desires of my flesh.

I am free from lasciviousness. I bear the fruit of temperance. In Jesus name, Amen.

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Creflo A. Dollar Jr. is Pastor and Founder of World Changers Ministries Christian Center, a non-denominational church located in College Park, Georgia. Formerly an Educational Therapist, he began the ministry with eight people in 1986. He is now an international teacher and conference speaker with a congregation of over 8,000 people. Creflo Dollar has been called by God to teach the Gospel with simplicity and understanding. He can be seen and heard throughout the world on "Changing Your World" broadcasts, via television and radio.