

RAY ORTLUND

THE
DEATH
OF
PORN

MEN OF
INTEGRITY
BUILDING
A WORLD OF
NOBILITY

Foreword by Thabiti Anyabwile

“It is rare that you find honesty and humility as well as honor in modern leaders. However, Ray Ortlund has exhibited such qualities and earned respect across multiple arenas. When a potential vacancy arose for the chaplaincy in the United States Congress, Ray Ortlund was first on our list. It is this level of trustworthiness that allows Ray to challenge the stronghold of exploitation endemic to pornography. Ray’s transparent approach cuts through the superficial layers, getting to the heart of the matter. This is a book that everyone should read, reminding us all of the value of being created in God’s image.”

Mark Walker, former congressman, North Carolina

“The subject of pornography tends to be embarrassing and can evoke feelings of helplessness and shame. Ray Ortlund refuses to pile onto that shame, and he wants you to know you’re not helpless. Like a loving and compassionate father, he calls us to freedom, to a better life, and to the death of porn’s grip on our imaginations that robs us of the true and beautiful intimacy our souls desperately hunger for.”

Matt Chandler, Lead Pastor, The Village Church, Dallas, Texas;
President, Acts 29 Church Planting Network; author, *The Mingling of Souls* and *The Explicit Gospel*

“In the pages of this book, Ray beautifully and compellingly calls us to be men of integrity building a world of nobility. He does this winsomely, graciously, and wisely in the form of letters infused with the tenderness and manliness of a father to his dear sons. I truly believe this book has the potential to be a culture changer. It will certainly impact, for the better, all who read and heed its wise and noble call.”

Brian Brodersen, Pastor, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California

“Over the last couple years, I’ve gotten to know Ray Ortlund on a deeper level. He’s struck me as a man of integrity and conviction, so when I heard he was writing a book to help Christians fight this evil thing called porn, I wasn’t surprised. His book is a great blend of theological depth and relatable, practical tools that I believe will help all people battle pornography use and addiction. Porn destroys families, relationships, and marriages, but most of all, it keeps us distant from God and near our shame. Thank you, Ray, for tackling this topic with such boldness and truth. Heaven is smiling at you.”

Preston Perry, poet; performance artist; teacher; apologist

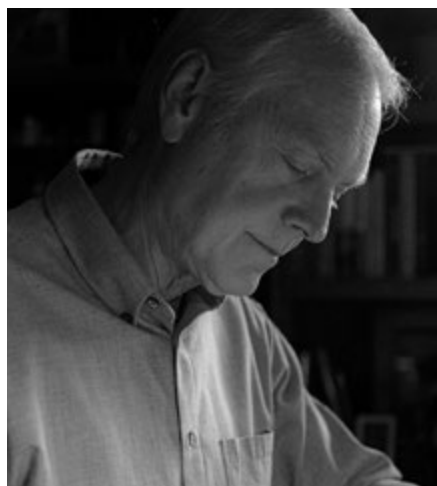
“*The Death of Porn* is the kind of book I want my sons and daughters to read. With sage counsel, Ray Ortlund tenderly leads and courageously calls us to envision a world free from the plague of pornography. This book inspires contrition over sin, instills courage against sin, and compels us to cast our hope fully upon Jesus.”

Garrett Kell, Pastor, Del Ray Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia;
author, *Pure in Heart: Sexual Sin and the Promises of God*

“*The Death of Porn* is a magnificent work of hope. Ray Ortlund does not shame us or flatter us. He lifts us into a sense of our own destiny—not with his words but with God’s. This book deepened my resolve to avoid living beneath my God-given dignity and to carve out a world of nobility as never before. We allowed porn in. By God’s grace, we can drive it out. It’s what we were born to do. If I could, I would put this book into the hands of every man in my generation.”

T. J. Tims, Lead Pastor, Immanuel Church, Nashville, Tennessee

The Death of Porn



Dear friend,
My heart longs to
reach your heart
through these letters.
Thank you for your
openness.

-Ray

The Death of Porn

Men of Integrity Building a World of Nobility

Ray Ortlund

Foreword by Thabiti Anyabwile

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*For my grandsons—
may you thrive as men of integrity.*

*And for my granddaughters—
may you flourish in a world of nobility.*

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Foreword

EVEN TO SOME OF US OLDER CATS, Ray Ortlund is a father figure. He gained that status not through assertion, position, or power but through encouragement, exhortation, empathy, and a seemingly boundless energy for Jesus. He's the kind of man you admire because you have the unshakeable sense that he loves you. And not just you. Everybody.

This is why Ray is an ideal choice for addressing one of the biggest scourges of our time—pornography. Right now, in homes, offices, and cars across the country, pornography is attaching its tentacles to the eyes, minds, and hearts of men, women, boys, and girls. It's sneaking into the lives of innocents through click bait and thirst traps. Pornography is attempting to tighten its grip on teenagers exploding with pubescent change, married men and women courting wanderlust in joyless as well as joyful marriages, and Christian leaders trying to maintain double lives of outward success and inward corruption. What used to be confined to magazines has made its way into the mainstream of society and the church.

Ray Ortlund understands that defeating the porn monster will not come by white-knuckle, jaw-clenched grit individually willing its way to victory when all other soldiers have fallen. Victory can be had, but only in the loving community of the local church with

saints covenanted together to stand against the wiles of the enemy in the truth of Jesus's gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ray understands that a teammate's hug is a much stronger weapon than a fan's pat on the back with a "dat a boy." That's why he writes about this most sensitive and dangerous subject with the tone and warmth of a fellow traveler.

In this book, Ray uses words to God-glorifying, soul-edifying effect. It's not that he's being clever or flattering. His words are simply devastating—in a good way. It's the effect of his sincerity! If out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, then deep in the wells of Ray's heart is a reservoir of fragrant balm and strengthening sweetness. Not the off-the-shelf sweetness of sugary snacks cheapened by additives and preservatives. These pages give us the mature sweetness of aging, like fine maple syrup, tapped with humility and experience, oozing from his heart to the reader's.

As you read this book, you get the sense that this is what the apostle Paul meant when describing his ministry among the Thessalonians:

But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. . . .

For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. 2:7, 11–12)

I don't know what kind of book on pornography you expected to read. But I suspect this book will surprise you with that strength of Christ that comes from love. It will remind you of who you are in Christ, of who the men and women around you are in God's image, of the fact that you are not alone. There is help. There is victory.

There is a way to regain the regality of being royalty, because God in Christ is renewing you and me in his image.

This book speaks to the discouraged and distracted, the suffering and sullen, the unbelieving and the unsuspecting, the haughty and the halting. It's for everyone who, even for a moment, thinks victory over pornography is not possible. It's for you because victory is not only possible—victory has been accomplished for us by Jesus the risen Savior.

Come, let Ray introduce you to this Jesus and shepherd you to the freedom and joy found in him.

Thabiti Anyabwile
Pastor, Anacostia River Church
Washington, DC

She Is Royalty

DEAR SON,

She matters too. She matters more than you know. That girl, that woman, the one on the porn site—she isn't just pixels on a screen. She's real. Somewhere, right now, she's out there trying to get by. I'll bet you any amount of money she didn't volunteer for porn. She was degraded and abused into it. And that precious woman has hopes and feelings and longings and sorrows, just like you. She is as human as you are, as worthy as you are, as royal as you are.

In this letter, I have some hard things to say. But here's where I'm going. I'm asking you to change how you see that woman on the porn site. I'm not asking you to make anything up. I'm only asking you to accept the way God sees her. He is on her side. He is indignant at the ways she is objectified, monetized, and mistreated.

Which leads me to ask you for something else. I'm also asking you to change how you treat her. I want you to stop abusing her and start defending her. You're doing one or the other. More on

that in a minute. But for now, just hold your emotional horses long enough to let me make my case.

The King of the universe created you to stand as royalty, advancing his kingdom. Let that awareness settle on you. Here's your next step: she is royalty too. God created *every* woman with high dignity and immeasurable worth. Whether or not any woman herself believes it, this is still true: God created her for majesty. *God* is why she matters. And no one has the right to degrade her, since God has dignified her. Whoever a woman is in his sight—that's what she's really worth.

Since, to God above, every woman is regal, cherished, worthy, it's about time we men demand of ourselves, and of all this world, that she be treated right.

Let's think back to that Scripture I quoted in my first letter. Remember the last line in that verse?

God created man in his own image;
 in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:27)

Back when the Bible was written, nobody else was saying that. It's not as though human thought was evolving upward, inching its way toward the equal royalty of the sexes. It's not as though the ancient philosophers and gurus got the ball into the red zone, and then the Bible finally scored the touchdown. No, Genesis 1:27 surprised everyone. It was God speaking into our abusive world with a bold claim: a woman deserves all the respect any man deserves, because she is created in God's image as much as any man.

In the ancient world, people came up with their own versions of how we all got going. The Babylonians, for example, believed the human race was the brainstorm of the god Marduk:

Blood I will mass and cause bones to be.
 I will establish a savage, “man” shall be his name.
 Verily, savage-man I will create.¹

The Babylonians saw themselves as savages, and they acted like it. Their creation story didn’t even mention “male and female.” But the Bible *celebrates* “male and female.” Genesis 1:27 is the first poetry in all the Bible, because God rejoices over us men and women. He doesn’t call us savage. He happily calls us royal—both man and woman equally.

But there’s no woman like Eve in the Babylonian account of creation. The first woman in all of history, and not even an honorable mention! But the Bible? Adam’s heart leaps with joyous love at first sight.

This at last is bone of my bones
 and flesh of my flesh;
 she shall be called Woman,
 because she was taken out of Man. (Gen. 2:23)

These are the very first recorded human words, and again they are poetry. Adam welcomes Eve with relief: “This *at last*. . .” He identifies with her, personally, closely, as “bone of my bones / and flesh of my flesh.” He isn’t threatened by her equality. It’s the very thing that thrills him.

He just finished naming the animals there in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:19–20). And lions and tigers have their place, I suppose. But only Eve has Adam’s heart. She isn’t property. She isn’t a prize of

1 “The Creation Epic,” trans. E. A. Speiser, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 68.

war. She isn't even—not yet, anyway—the mother of his children. In and of herself, by God's design, she is worthy to be celebrated. And Adam *loves* it this way—and embraces her.

We call this amazing human arrangement “marriage.” It's the only place where a man and woman should experience each other sexually. It's where sex becomes the win-win God wants it to be: “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:25). There they are, Adam and Eve, married by God, together in the garden of Eden, naked and sexual and both completely happy. And in that place of permanent belonging and gentle acceptance, the woman isn't the only one naked and vulnerable. She isn't exploited, shared, or sold. They are *both* naked, and not ashamed or degraded or used, but comfortably at ease, fully accepted, tenderly embraced.²

A man and a woman can still experience this today, under the blessing of God, within marriage. Through their wedding vows, they give up their solo futures and commit fully to one another. On their wedding day, they step inside the circle of the “one flesh” union of marriage (Gen. 2:24), where they share everything.

Everything.

Other healthy relationships limit how far things will go. What's unique about marriage is the unlimited openness a man and a woman joyfully sign up for. It's why marriage is sealed, celebrated, and refreshed through sex. Marriage is all about total sharing, total belonging—like real sex. Inside the circle where only a husband and wife fully belong, they cultivate safety and honor, so that sex is unashamedly joyful for both of them equally. When the minister

2 This rhetorical device (“not ashamed”) is called *antenantiosis*, which uses the negative “in order to express the positive in a very high degree,” according to F. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1971), 160. For example, if I say, “He is no fool,” I mean, “He is very wise.” I thank Dr. Bruce Waltke for pointing this out to me.

concludes their wedding ceremony with “You may now kiss the bride,” he is saying, “Let the sex, as God meant it to be, finally begin!” Are the man and woman still vulnerable? More than ever. But for that very reason, their intimacy is all the more wondrous.

Now let’s fast-forward to the end of the Bible, where we finally see the point of it all. The risen Jesus will not merely upgrade this existence we’re stuck with now. He will lift us into “a new heaven and a new earth,” where we will “reign forever and ever” (Rev. 21:1; 22:5). In that sparkling new universe, every redeemed woman will stand in glory as a Queen of the New Creation. No matter how she has sinned in this world, no matter how she has been sinned against, she will be *radiantly royal forever and ever*.

In my mind’s eye, I see her there even now. She stands like Lady Galadriel, queen of the elves in *The Lord of the Rings*. In Tolkien’s vision, Galadriel is breathtaking with beauty, knowledge, and power. She speaks gravely, wisely, and courteously. She is mighty, fair, and fearless. When the Fellowship of the Ring must leave Lothlórien, Galadriel asks Gimli the dwarf what parting gift he would like to receive from her: “‘None, Lady,’ answered Gimli. ‘It is enough for me to have seen the Lady of the Galadhrim, and to have heard her gentle words.’”

Galadriel is surprised by his humility. So she encourages him to go ahead and ask for something so that he isn’t the only visitor to leave without a token of their solidarity:

“There is nothing, Lady Galadriel,” said Gimli, bowing low and stammering. “Nothing, unless it might be—unless it is permitted to ask, nay, to name a single strand of your hair, which surpasses the gold of the earth as the stars surpass the gems of the mine. I do not ask for such a gift. But you commanded me to name my desire.”

The elves are astonished by his audacious request. But Galadriel smiles with approval:

“None have ever made to me a request so bold and yet so courteous. And how shall I refuse, since I commanded him to speak? But tell me, what would you do with such a gift?”

“Treasure it, Lady,” he answered. “. . . And if ever I return to the smithies of my home, it shall be set in imperishable crystal to be an heirloom of my house and a pledge of good-will between the Mountain and the Wood until the end of days.”

Then the lady unbraided one of her long tresses, and cut off three golden hairs, and laid them in Gimli’s hand.³

Our world today is blind to the glories of true manhood and true womanhood. But the Bible teaches us men to respect every woman as a potential Galadriel, whose glory can, by God’s grace, leave us awestruck forever.

The porn industry sure doesn’t teach us to see women that way. That vile world is oblivious to a woman’s actual glory. But now we know, thanks to the Bible, that every woman was created for a destiny so magnificent that the story of it cannot be fully told in all the ages of time. God’s heart for her, God’s purpose for her, can only be revealed in the eternal new creation. All this world, even at its best, is too small for her, too unworthy of her. And every woman—however much she suffers in this world—if she entrusts her future to the care of the risen King, he will tell her true story in the next world forever.

What C. S. Lewis said of everyone is no less true of every woman:

³ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (London: HarperCollins, 2005), 376.

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no *ordinary* people.⁴

By now, Son, I'm guessing that a new realization is breaking upon you that every woman's sexuality is a sacred gift of God. Remember how Jesus taught us? "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:27–28).

To Jesus, even if we aren't literally touching, still, we are really taking. And, Jesus tell us, it's a violation of the sacred.

My friend Sam Allberry helps us face the seriousness of our sexualized thoughts about any woman we're not married to:

Jesus is saying that her sexuality is precious and valuable, that she has a sexual integrity to her which matters and should be honored by everyone else. *He is saying that this sexual integrity is so precious that it must not be violated, even in the privacy of someone else's mind.* Even if she were never to find out about it,

⁴ C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 14–15. Italics original.

she would have been greatly wronged by being thought about lustfully. . . . Jesus is showing us that our sexuality is far more precious than we might have realized, and that his teaching is actually a form of protection for it.⁵

Okay, now we're ready to understand what porn really is. Porn is Satan recruiting us to degrade a woman into the *opposite* of who she is—from royalty to slavery.

Satan *hates* women. It was a woman, remember, who brought Jesus into this world, dooming Satan's evil kingdom forever. Satan cannot get his hands on the risen Jesus, but he sure can torment women. And he does. Porn is Satan—yes, *Satan*—assaulting women, denying their glory, dragging them down, because they remind him every day of the true King he hates and fears.

I want to make this as real as I can. So let me tell you about a brave friend of mine. Her name is Tara.⁶ She is real. Her story is true. With her permission, here are some things she courageously revealed during a recent conversation:

My first memory in life was when I was four years old, and I was being assaulted in a bathroom. By the time I was eighteen, I had been hurt by eight people on many occasions. I can't remember a time in my life when I wasn't hurting or being hurt.

When I was trafficked, it wasn't like a violent kidnapping. The man was nice to me. His line was, "You should do these things

5 Sam Allberry, *Why Does God Care Who I Sleep With?* (Epsom, Surrey: Good Book, 2020), 18. Italics original.

6 Tara is her real name. She told me she wants her real name used because she's a real person with a real identity. Too many times in the past her personhood and identity were taken from her.

for me, because I'm taking care of you." No one had ever cared for me. Why wouldn't I be grateful?

He had me work in the sex clubs he owned, where I was used. He filmed me without my knowledge. The very first time I wondered, *How can I get through this?* Somehow I did get through it. Then I saw the camera.

I didn't get angry about all this. Why would I? Those feelings would've required me to be human, and I wasn't human. I didn't think of myself as human and worthy of being treated well. No one ever saw me as having potential or value. No one ever saw me as a person at all.

Some things in my past are hard to remember, because I had to detach from my body, my mind and my heart just to survive. I didn't have the luxury of feeling. I didn't have the luxury of being human. Nobody ever asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I didn't know there were options. For me, there weren't any. So I had to go along with the trafficking. What choice did I have? Hope for a better life? Hope was just another luxury not afforded to me.

The very things about me that men wanted to look at—to me, they were horrible. I hated myself. I still hate myself. I still battle shame every day.

Years later, after my husband left me, a neighbor told me about Jesus. We talked for hours. I told her that Jesus wouldn't want anything to do with me. I was sure of that. How could he? Nobody ever wanted me, except for sex. I didn't deserve to have a life. I thought—calmly, matter-of-factly—that I'd get my kids through high school and then end my life. I would just be done. Why not? Some people are meant to live, and I wasn't one of them. But through prayer and an army of friends that God surrounded me with, I came to realize Jesus had never abandoned

me. He was there with me all the time. He wept with me. He wept *for* me. He is now restoring me. My life now is as opposite as it could be from where I used to be. That past is not who I am. I am not defined by what was done to me by them; I am defined by what was done *for* me by Him.

Tara is discovering her true royalty in Christ. Not every woman has that advantage. But every woman should have it.

Some women never get out of that prison. I'm one of the lucky ones. I should be dead by now. I should be a statistic. But Jesus saved me.

Eventually, I got a job with a Christian ministry. My boss and his wife gave me a chance. I worked hard and learned and did well and got promoted. They were the first people to ever tell me I had value. My boss then joined a larger ministry with incredible leaders, and I went to this new job. We've worked together now for seven years. I've finally been able to get not only the counseling I needed but also the loving fellowship of people who believe so much in me. A family. Because of these wonderful servants of God, I finally have my freedom.

I'm also remarried now. My husband knows everything. And he treats me like I'm a priceless treasure. I keep wondering, *When is he going to realize I don't deserve his love?* But he tells me all the time, "I want to spend every day, for the rest of my life, showing you how much Jesus loves you." And he does. I had never before seen a man treat a woman like royalty. It's ridiculously amazing.

Sometimes, I admit, I want to run from him. Pain is familiar. I'm used to it. I know what to expect. To be loved and valued is wonderful, but still sometimes confusing.

I asked Tara, “What would you want to say to men who look at porn?” Here’s her answer:

What if it was your sister? The women used in the sex industry don’t just have a face and a body. They have a soul too. They have a name. No woman grows up thinking, *I hope I’ll spend my life being abused*. But every woman in porn has been trafficked. Trafficking is simply making a profit from someone’s sex act. That’s *every* woman in porn. It’s *all* coercive. Every woman is under duress. Every woman would rather be anywhere else.

If you want to know what it’s really like, go sit in a dark closet for five minutes and see how it feels. Then imagine being kept in there for years and years.

For a guy, it’s a short burst of sexual gratification, and then he moves on. But for the woman, the effects *from that single moment of sexual selfishness* can last for the rest of her life. Every moment of porn leaves behind a broken woman, sitting in the dark closet, raising her hand and saying, “But I’m still here. I’m a human being. I have feelings. I have a heart. I have a name.”

Men must know we’re real. And we don’t want to hide any more. We want out of that closet.

I thank my heroic friend for pulling the curtain back, showing what’s really going on behind the playful appearances.

Now let’s face the truth. Online porn is a man siding with Satan. (Women look at porn too, but this is between you and me.) Porn is a man saying to that woman on the screen, that potential Galadriel: “I don’t care about you. I don’t care about your personal story that got you onto this wretched porn site. I don’t care about what will happen to you when the filming is over—how you’ll drag yourself back to your apartment and get drunk just to stop feeling the pain.

I don't care about what you'll be facing tomorrow, which will be yet another day of this torment. I don't *want* to know what you're suffering. I don't even want to know your name. *You* don't matter. All that matters here is *me*. And not the 'royal me' God created but the predatory me, the masturbatory me, the urge-of-the-moment me, the selfish me that Satan is robbing of life, even as I rob you of life. So whoever you are there on the screen—I'll click over to some other victim soon, but you just keep up the show, okay? Keep smiling while you're abused. Keep it up, while I masturbate and masturbate and masturbate, because *nothing about me or you really matters anyway.*"

The word for that evil mentality is *despair*. Dorothy Sayers calls it

the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, loves nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive only because there is nothing it would die for. We have known it far too well for many years. The only thing perhaps we have not known about it is that it is a mortal sin.⁷

And a "mortal sin" is a sin so bad that, without repentance, it will damn us to eternal hell. The proof of that is how it turns this world into a living hell right now.

For example, a major porn site has been exposed for profiting from videos of rape, abuse, sadism, torture, racism, and trafficking uploaded by users. There is no accountability. No justice. No humanity. And when you go to such a site, do you realize what you're doing? You're walking into a big, semidarkened room, with

7 Dorothy L. Sayers, *Letters to a Diminished Church: Passionate Arguments for the Relevance of Christian Doctrine* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2004), 98.

lots of beds and couches and floor space. This room is crowded with sexual predators of many kinds, and the women and children in there are being tormented. The victims who look like they're having fun are faking it, because they'll be punished even more if they don't perform on command. And you're standing there at the doorway into that room looking around for the "decent" option for your enjoyment, because you're a good guy and not involved in the really bad stuff. *That's* where you are. *That's* what you're doing—when you *should* be turning up the lights and rescuing the victims and calling the police.

Every single girl in that horrible place matters to God above. If she doesn't matter to you too, then you've taken your stand not only against her, but even more, you've taken your stand with Satan against God.

But God, in mercy, is calling you to a complete turnaround. It starts with you becoming honest with yourself about where you're going and what you're supporting.

You'll start getting free when you start getting honest.

No man is helped by using nicey-nice hypocritical words like "I slipped up today." Or passive words like "This happened to me." Every man who wants his freedom back must start using true words that match what porn is. If you're watching it, you're doing it.

So how's this for next-level honesty? If you look at porn, be honest enough to say to God, "Today I entertained myself with sexual exploitation," or "Today I joined in the abuse of a woman," or "Today I watched her degradation for my pleasure," or "Today I took my stand against you and with Satan."

You think I'm going too far? No, I'm not. Again, look what Jesus said: "Everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

What is he saying? *The look is morally equivalent to the act.* Yes, outward acts matter too in the eyes of the law. But to Jesus, the intent within is equally serious. That's how much he values every woman. And as soon as we start seeing things his way, scary as it is, we'll start getting free. And the whole world will start getting better.

I've written to you about your glory and her glory. And, I'm thinking, enough is enough for this letter. So I'll finish by asking you to accept this key insight: *Every relationship is either Christlike or predatory.* There is no neutrality. But you *can* become Christlike, in heart and behavior, toward every woman on the face of the earth.

That's where we're going next. But let me warn you. As you grow in experiencing your royalty—and hers—the difference might feel shocking. One of my heroes, the Anglican bishop Festo Kivengere of Uganda, preaching in England years ago, told this true story about a man renewed by the risen Christ:

I could tell you a case of a man . . . back home, forty-five years old—a pagan, illiterate, who knew nothing about Christ. Then he was brought by grace, through the preaching of the Christians, into the presence of Jesus and Him crucified; and that man was so changed that within a month, when impure thoughts came into his heart, he literally went outside from a meeting and vomited. . . . What sensitivity! A man steeped in paganism, with no Bible training, no background. And now in the light of Calvary, . . . this man is taken, re-created, renewed, his conscience is so clean that when impure thoughts came, he even went and physically

vomited. A sensitivity had been created. The Holy Spirit had renewed the personality. Is this your case?⁸

Your vomit doesn't wash away your sins. Only the blood of Jesus can do that. But it won't do you any harm at all to get sickened over your sins. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).

It's sure better than shutting down our sensitivity, don't you think?

Because she matters,
Ray

8 Festo Kivengere, "Christ the Renewer," in *The Keswick Week 1972*, ed. H. F. Stevenson (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972), 75.

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