

The truth about sexual lust; Part 2.



by Martin Zender

A battle of the sexes is raging. Men and women love one another—somewhat—but they do not like one another very much. Communication has broken down, and the respective parties hunker down in their respective caves. It is believed that only men retreat into caves, but this is not true. Females also retreat into metaphoric subterranean getaways, although their caves are much better decorated.

Did I mention that, additionally, there is a terrible lack of trust between the sexes? I should have. Men and women are doubting one another to death, especially on the topic of sex.

All of what I have said above, concerning men and women, has reached epidemic proportions. But what about *married* men and women?

Dear reader, these are the people I am talking about. I know it, and you know it: The number one source of discord among married couples is sexual miscommuni-

cation. Some silly part of you may object: “But no, the problem is money.” Not really. A couple undergoing financial strain can see itself through this crisis, or any crisis, with great sex. But the couple whose sex life is under water can barely survive arguments about how to wallpaper the bathroom, let alone about drastic financial crises. How ironic. The one thing God meant to be the ultimate comfort and joy in marriage—sex—is the thing sending people into their respective caves, or worse, the fastest.

This series of articles, based on my book *The Lie of Every Man’s Battle*, is about sex. It is about what God—rather than Western culture or self-proclaimed moralists—has to say about sex. It is about refuting the terrible condemnation heaped upon both men and women by two authors of a popular Christian book that, instead of helping husbands and wives, has perched them on the brink of three ultimate and avoidable disasters: 1) condemnation, 2) guilt, and 3) divorce.

Men, did you know that Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on your behalf can be effectually eradicated by a single pair of red, high-heeled pumps?

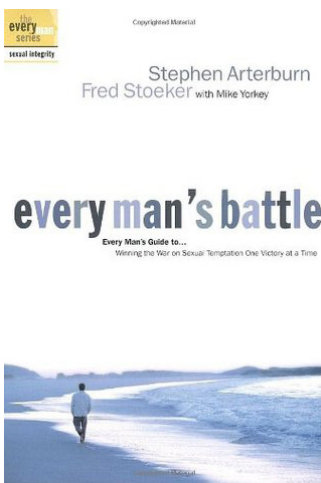
Let me ask you this: Have you prayed to God lately? Splendid. Follow-up question: Have you, a married man, admired another woman’s beauty in the last twenty-four hours, and said to yourself, *That woman sure is sexy?* I’m sorry to hear it. There goes your prayer life; you just severed your connection to God, friend. In addition, you may as well have grabbed a knife and run it through your wife’s left ventricle. Your wife is a lamb,



and you just slaughtered her by admiring the beauty of another woman. You are no better than an adulterer. In fact, you *are* an adulterer.

Fortunately, there is a solution. It isn't easy, but it's better than being on God's *and* your wife's black list. Here it is: As long as you can remove every single hint of sexual thought from your mind every day for the rest of your life—for any woman except your wife (if you don't have a wife, then you can't have a single sexual thought for *any* woman, sorry)—then just maybe you can restore your marriage and your relationship with your Creator. Jesus Christ *wants* to like you, but if you keep looking at those bra ads in the newspaper, your personal claim upon the cross of Calvary is on hold until you can learn to behave yourself.

* * *



Incredibly, this is the teaching of a Christian book that has, for nearly twenty years, been destroying men and marriages under the guise of helping them: *Every Man's Battle*. According to the back cover, this book is a “phenomenal bestseller” that presents “a practical, detailed plan for any man who

desires sexual purity.”

What exactly is involved with becoming sexually pure? And what exactly is meant by, “a detailed plan”? I'm glad you asked. Here is a quote from page 126 of *Every Man's Battle*, in a chapter titled, “Bouncing the Eyes.” The writer is Stephen Arterburn:

You can win this battle by training your eyes to “bounce” away from sights of pretty women and sensual images. If you “bounce your eyes” for six weeks, you can win this war. You need to build a reflex action by training your eyes to immediately bounce away from the sexual, like the jerk of your hand away from a hot stove. Let's repeat that, for emphasis: When your eyes bounce toward a woman, they must bounce away *immediately*.

This is not a joke. You have just read an actual quote from the book. How in the world are millions of men buying this book and then, of all unlikely things, buying into the aberrant concept of hating beauty?

Two reasons. The first reason is that wives are buying this book for their husbands and licking their chops. The wives of these men are so deep down angry and disgusted at their husbands for some actual or perceived wrong (a wrong that has something to do with sex, I'm betting), that the wives subliminally—if not overtly—enjoy the thought of their husbands carrying out the perverted penance described in this book.



“If it weren't for my husband, we'd be the perfect couple.”

Before I get to the second reason, it may also be true that these wives actually believe that the unnatural practices described in *Every Man's Battle* will help their marriages rather than cause their husbands to eventually resent and despise them. There are two dynamics, then, transpiring here with the wives. I represent these in the form of inner dialogues:

- a) *it serves the insensitive bastard right*
- b) *this might actually help our marriage*

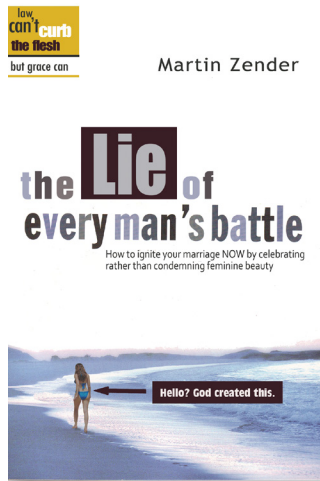
A good Christian woman, of course, would never *say* the word, “bastard,” but I am guessing that many are thinking it—and worse.

The second reason why normal, healthy men are willing to buy *Every Man's Battle* and become unhealthy, beauty-denying automatons, is that religion is a powerful, seductive force. Religion loves more than anything to turn normal, happy people into guilt-ridden ascetics. Satan works overtime transferring people from the grace and liberty of God and Christ (Who actually love bra ads, by the way), into the misery and bondage of law.

How does Satan do this? He dresses up law in a righteousness suit.

“Bouncing your eyes *away* from God's most beauti-

ful, pleasing creatures is a righteous thing for you to do,” proposes the King of Deception. “Look at how many other men are doing it. Don’t you feel bad for *not* doing it? Why aren’t you joining all the *good* men of this world? Think of how many times you have hurt your wife. Think of how



many times you have hurt God. Don’t you want to do something now to make up for it? To make up for your sins against both your wife and God? Then buy Stoeker and Arterburn’s phenomenally bestselling book!”

This is a powerful argument. Satan knows that hard-won self-righteousness feels very good to people. He knows that any man taking this bait will eventually become

embittered and will destroy rather than heal his marital bond. Not only this, but the God of Happiness, Beauty, and Peace will now become a God of challenge, condemnation, and fear.

Yippee. Where do I sign up?

There is no bigger enemy of true manhood than the diversion and perversion of man-made religious exercise, especially that exercise which hopes to “please God” by denying the flesh its God-given bent. This is what the book, *Every Man’s Battle*, is. It is a perversion of truth and a condemnation of the way God made men. Whenever a religion or a sect tries to tell a man that the draughts of testosterone coursing through his body, given him by God, are something to overcome rather than celebrate, something is terribly wrong.

Times without light

Remember the Middle Ages? Google them, my friend. The Middle Ages were a time when religion controlled everyday life, and human nature (that is, the way God made us) was considered evil. Everything naturally good to the human was considered evil by religion: art, literature, alcohol, music, food, sex. Another name for the Middle Ages was the Dark Ages; they called it “dark” for a reason; fighting the way God made us is a grim, light-free pastime. Talk about an uphill battle. Fighting the flesh and denying natural impulses eventually exhausts people, making them lash out at the ones they feel are denying them.



In the case of husbands, that would be wives.

This wonderful time in history, by the way, was brought to us by the Catholic Church, the ridiculously fun-free religion populated by monk-like creatures in scary hoods who liked torturing people.

Speaking of monks in scary hoods who like torturing people, Fred Stoeker, who co-authors *Every Man’s Battle* along with Stephen Arterburn, also believes men must train themselves (be brave; it only takes six weeks of intense practice) to “bounce the eyes,” quickly, from any beautiful female. From page 149—

Okay, you’ve made a covenant with your eyes to starve them and to train them to bounce. Maybe you’ve defined your weak areas, creating a custom defense for each one, and have picked up your sword and shield. What can you expect to happen over the next few weeks, even years?

Um, gee—I don’t know, Fred. A nervous breakdown, perhaps? A killing spree? Alcohol addiction?

A normal, natural man can only force himself into unnatural religious gymnastics for so long before he blows. This is how it is when normal people determine to become abnormal and adhere to artificial laws of religion: they all eventually crack.



There is an insistent move in Christian churches today to domesticate men. By “domesticate,” I mean make men more like women, that is, calmer, nicer, more “spiritual,” less sexually insistent. A lot of the women like this because they think that it “evens things out.” Good though stupid men are willing to cooperate. A good albeit stupid man is willing to do anything to make peace with his wife, get along with his pastor, and please the angry God. And so these good yet stupid men will smile, shake the pastor’s hand, hug their wives, and then, when no one is looking, dive headfirst into real and cyber sexual candylands.

This disaster is so avoidable.

Men:

- Do you want to stay normal and *not* crack?
- Do you want to be able to openly and honestly celebrate female beauty without alienating your wife?
- Would you like to arrive at a place of such love and understanding and grace in your marriage that your wife actually *points out* feminine beauty to you, rather than condemning it and feeling threatened by it?
- Would you like your wife to discover, for perhaps the first time in her life, how her acceptance of your God-given bent would wash you in such grace that it would drive you in thankfulness to *her* feet, and hers alone?

I know you. All you want is to be accepted. All you want is to be loved for who you are. All you want is to not have to hide your deepest self from the person nearest and dearest to you.

Women:

► Do you really want to live with a human time bomb?

► Do you want to know what *God* has to say, in His Word, about female beauty? Are you willing for this revelation to clash with the standards of Western, religious culture?

► Would you like to become so sexually confident that no other woman on Earth can ever threaten you? Would you believe me if I told you that your husband *wants* to adore you, but that it is hard for him to do that when you no longer adore yourself?

► Would you like to be married to a man who weeps in your arms and gives himself totally to you because you finally grasp and accept the depth of his sexual longing and no longer condemn him for it?

► Would you believe me if I told you that the key to having your man all to yourself, forever, is to *celebrate* his freedom to admire feminine beauty? (This strange, amazing, principle, by the way—which works every time—is known as “grace.” You may have heard of it. It is the one thing, however, you will not find anywhere in *Every Man’s Battle*.)

If any of my readers have answered “yes” to any or all of these questions, then this series of articles and the book from which these writings come are for you.

Do you have testosterone coursing through your veins? Are you in love with someone who does?

Then *The Lie of Every Man’s Battle* will change your life.



THE PROBLEM

The authors of *Every Man’s Battle* are frightfully unaware of the grace of God and the power of the cross to combat flesh. It is as if they have never heard of grace. Instead of grace, they tout the power of law-keeping and the ability of flesh and blood to accomplish the dictates of God, and to please Him.

My goal is to liberate you from the tyranny of the law. My goal is to rescue you from a battle you were never meant to fight.

You may be a porn addict, or the wife of a porn addict. Or you may simply be someone who enjoys looking at beautiful women. Or you may simply be a wife who absolutely hates the fact that your husband enjoys looking at beautiful women. These articles and this book will solve both of your problems, simultaneously, with a technique you would never in a million years imagine could work.

The biggest shock for me when first reading *Every Man's Battle* was that it was like reading Moses all over again, except now the rock-hurling patriarch was wearing a Jesus suit. *Every Man's Battle* occasionally uses the language of grace. It does use the name of Jesus Christ. But in the end, these are false fronts. Behind almost every sentence lies the wolf of law and condemnation. In *Every Man's Battle*, a man is one glance away (a glance at a lingerie ad, or an R-rated movie, or a glistening jogger, or a pornographic website) from disappointing God and ruining everything.

STEVE ARTERBURN: God offers you freedom from the slavery of sin through the cross of Christ, and He created your eyes and mind with an ability to be trained and controlled. We simply have to stand up and walk by His power in the right path (pg. 4).

FRED STOEKER: You'll be holy when you choose not to sin (pg. 92).

Oh. Is that all I have to do? Stand up and walk in the right path? Choose not to sin? Wow. I guess I didn't realize how simple holiness was. All I have to do is not sin. I'd really like to do this, Stephen and Fred. I do want to follow in your holy footsteps. But can I start Monday? I would like to enjoy the weekend.

"[God] created your eyes and mind with an ability to be trained and controlled."

Really? I thought God created my eyes so that I could see and imbibe of the pleasures and colors of His world. Not according to Arterburn and

Stoeker. According to them, the human eyes—especially male eyes—are a huge problem. According the Arterburn and Stoeker, God created male eyes to be controlled. The measure to which a man can control his eyes, therefore, becomes the measure by which that man pleases God.

The apostle Paul teaches the futility of such feats of asceticism.

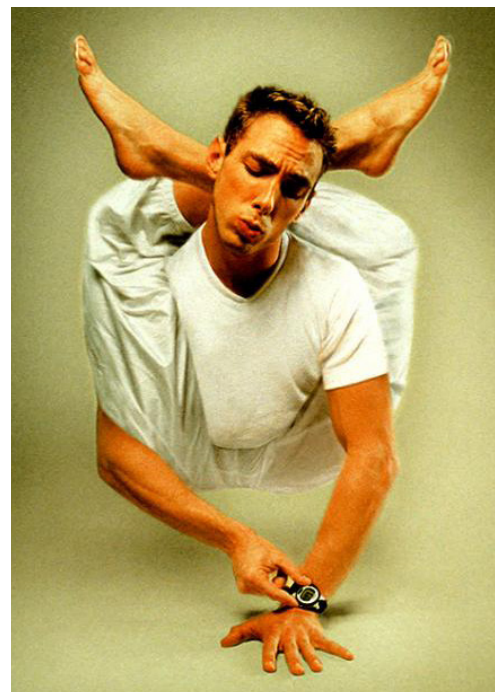
Arterburn and Stoeker never got that memo.

Here is Paul in Colossians 2:20-23 from the J.B. Phillips paraphrase:

So if, through your faith in Christ, you are dead to the principles of this world's life, why, as if you were still part and parcel of this world-wide system, do you take the slightest notice of these purely human prohibitions—"Don't touch this," "Don't taste that" and "Don't handle the other?" "This," "that," and "the other" will all pass away after use! I know that these regulations look wise with their self-inspired efforts at piety, their policy of self-humbling, and their studied neglect of the body. But in actual practice they are of no moral value, but simply pamper the flesh.

Every Man's Battle concentrates on what it supposes to be sin and focuses on failure. Whenever one engages in such exercise, he or she actually ends up pampering the flesh, rather than fixing it. How? Religious humans love a battle.

The news that there is "now therefore no condemnation" (Romans 8:1), actually disappoints some people. This is what Paul means when he says the studied neglect of the body ends up pampering the flesh; victories over the flesh won by terrific feats of self-effort set some people above others. Some people are tougher than others; some are more disciplined than others; some can control their minds and their eyes better than others. The ones who manage this cannot help but look down upon the sorry saps who don't or can't fight as hard.





This enterprise of comparing one's life to other lives (and worse, comparing one's life with the life of Christ—the WWJD Syndrome), is a rollercoaster ride of frustration, guilt, and condemnation. Yet millions of men have chosen to buy tickets to this ride, entering into mortal combat against their flesh and—worse—against the legitimate God-given bent *of* their flesh, as though “natural” were commensurate with “evil.”

“God offers you freedom from the slavery of sin through the cross of Christ.”

No, Stephen. God does not *offer* this freedom, He declares it to be so. Freedom from sin is an objective declaration of God operating *in spite* of our failures. The apostle Paul told the saints in Rome—

“Now, being freed from Sin, you are enslaved to Righteousness” (Rom. 6:18).

(Let us assume, for the moment, the premise that

looking at beautiful women could possibly be a sin.) The apostle declared the Romans to be free from sin *right then*, exactly where they stood. But didn't the Romans still sin? Of course they did. Consider the very next verse:

“As a man am I saying this, because of the infirmity of your flesh.”

The Romans were free from sin even while infirm in the flesh. The flesh need not be “straightened out” before freedom from sin is attained. This is because freedom from sin is an objective declaration of God, based on an objective act of Christ, operating independently of our acts. Otherwise, who in the world could be free from sin? Can anyone stop sinning? The miracle of the gospel of grace is that God declares us to be something we are not yet.

In other words, God “calls what is not as if it were” (Romans 4:17).

Thus, we are enslaved to Righteousness. *And this is the only thing that will curb our flesh.* Only when we realize how righteous God considers us (it's called “justification”), will we find power to cope with sin.

This occurs in spite of our failings.

How are we, then, free from sin, even while sinning? We are free from the guilt and condemnation of sin. We are free from worrying that sin will wreck our God-life and make Him not like us any more.

The essence of religion, in a nutshell, is this: YOUR SIN WILL KEEP GOD FROM LIKING YOU, SO YOU HAD BETTER START TRYING HARD TO DELIVER YOURSELF FROM IT.

This is the message of Satan, not God. It is also the message of *Every Man's Battle*. Satan wants us absorbed with the performance of our flesh, because then our affections are taken away from the accomplishments of Christ. Here is the essence of religion in an even tighter nutshell: FIX YOUR FLESH.

Such a disposition denies the effectiveness of the cross. What an insult to God and Christ.

Those focused upon fixing their flesh miss the joy of justification.

But don't we have to fix the flesh in order to be responsible Christians?

No. Fixing the flesh is the occupation of *unenlightened* Christians.

Fixing the flesh is the juiciest bait Satan offers humans.

The paradox is that, only by ignoring the flesh and focusing on the grace and deliverance of Christ, can the flesh actually be permanently curbed. Any other method (such as that proposed in *Every Man's Battle*,) is doomed to failure. Trying to fix the flesh with prohibitions and laws



(“control the eyes”) only aggravates the problem, as I shall prove when I tackle the context of Romans, chapter 7.

“God offers you freedom from the slavery of sin through the cross of Christ,” writes Stephen Arterburn.

But, Stephen. I have read your book. Your book is an introduction *to* the slavery of sin. A man who must live the rest of his life bouncing his eyes from beauty as though he were removing his hand from a hot stove—in what way is this man free from sin?

Even allowing, for the moment, your absurd premise that appreciating beauty could somehow be sin, such a man setting out to battle it becomes the very thing you claim to deliver him from: a slave of sin.

A slave of sin, Stephen, is just as much someone who is constantly worried about his or her flesh, as someone constantly indulging that flesh. “A slave of sin” describes someone who is sinning like crazy, as well as someone trying like crazy not to sin. The issue is: sin.

True freedom from sin would say—even in a book supposing the admiration of beauty to be sin—“Men, even if you *do* look at bra ads in the newspaper—twelve hours a

day—or even if you *do* drool over the Sport’s Illustrated Swimsuit Edition until your mouth goes dry, you are free from sin.” *That* is the message of the cross. It’s called grace. Grace is unmerited favor. *Unmerited* favor—get it? Grace is God saying to us, “No matter what You do, I love You. This is because I now see you as justified in my Son. I don’t see *you*, I see Him.”

From this solid foundation of grace, we are now in a relaxed enough state to deal with whatever sins do vex our lives. Better yet, let’s determine what is sin and what isn’t; we shall eventually do just that in an uncoming installment.

* * *

I am not making light of sin. I am saying that the only way to deal with sin is to realize our freedom from it, and that, because of the cross of Christ, it can no longer condemn us. The *last* thing able to curb the flesh is worrying and fretting over it, imagining God is somehow unhappy with us until we stop being bad. Unfortunately, this is the very message of *Every Man’s*

Battle. Talk about starting off on the wrong foot. Men who have been enjoying a taste of grace before picking up this book, will lose it before finishing Arterburn's and Stoeker's introduction. Those who never realized they were in a battle for their lives will soon become "enlightened" and launch upon a gargantuan fight they will inevitably lose.

This is precisely what Satan wants people to do. Such battles undo the peace and security of the cross. Satan cannot undo what the cross did, but he can sure keep people from knowing about it.

As we shall see, it is not simply that Arterburn and Stoeker insist that bouncing the eyes from beauty is a good



“Those who never realized they were in a battle for their lives will soon become ‘enlightened’ and launch upon a gargantuan fight they will inevitably lose.”

thing to do. That would be ridiculous enough. Rather, they are telling us that *one cannot truly please God* unless one eliminates “every hint of sexual immorality” from one’s life. This is what makes the book dangerous, which is to say, spiritually damaging. And of course, it is Arterburn and Stoeker—not God—who define “sexual immorality,” as we shall see in the subsequent installment.

ARTERBURN: So why did I start writing a book? Because I felt deeply that if God would grant me such a voice in His kingdom, I could help give even more men some practical steps toward victory and to help set them free to help others.

Dear Stephen, the most practical step you could have taken to free men spiritually would have been to quote them Romans 8:1. But since you did not do that, I will. Here it is:

“There is now therefore no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.”

This is victory, Stephen, and it was won by Jesus Christ on the cross, not by you bouncing your eyes from supposedly evil bra ads. If you define victory from sin as “bouncing the eyes” and never looking at bra ads for the rest of one’s life, then victory from sin waxes and wanes, depending on one’s own daily efforts and successes. It means that today one may be free from sin because of good behavior, but tomorrow one misbehaves and loses one’s freedom from sin. God likes a particular man today, but tomorrow He frowns upon the same man, all based upon the man’s behavior. Is this the way you see it? Apparently so.

ARTERBURN: The following verse inspired me to keep plodding away on this book night after night, month after month:

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions ...
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will turn back to you. (Psalm 51:1,12-13)*

Get it? God’s plan is to set sinners free and then use them to teach others. God has been using me in just that way, and I trust He will use you as well.

What can we say about a man who sets himself up as a teacher of sinners, who has not even realized Jesus Christ died on a cross and saved the world from sin, condemnation, and death? What can we say about a man who constantly refers to a verse from the Old Testament, written during a time when people gathering sticks on the Sabbath got stoned ... when God required people to kill bulls and lambs and goats ... when penitents relied upon the efforts of a high priest, who himself entered with fear and trembling once a year into the Holy of Holies, hoping to avoid death by dressing correctly?

Is this a man we can trust? To fuel and inspire himself to write his portion of a book introducing men to a monumental battle against flesh that they’re not even supposed to fight, this man concentrates on and is inspired by a passage of Scripture showing King David begging for mercy and



praying to have his transgressions blotted out.

Is there anything wrong with King David begging for mercy and praying to have his transgressions blotted out? Not at all. Neither was there anything wrong with Noah building an ark. The thing is, ark-building is out of God's timing today, as is begging for mercy. David lived before the coming of Christ. King David, as spiritual as he was in his day, had never read Romans 8:1. He had no clue that a human could be justified by faith. How could he? The coming of Christ was 1,000 years away. David lived during an era of "Do this, or else."

Stephen Arterburn can't claim David's excuse. Therefore, Stephen Arterburn is simply ignorant. He writes from a time warp—from a land far, far away.

Trusting Stephen Arterburn to teach us about sin is like resurrecting Stonewall Jackson to teach us about combating terrorism, or raising Copernicus for a seminar on the Apple iPod.

Arterburn is fighting Sin with sticks, stones, and sling-shots.

David is dead, Stephen. So is Moses.

Mr. Arterburn, what if someone saved your son from drowning? Would you spend the rest of your life praying for your son to be saved from drowning? Would not this be like receiving a gift, and then saying to the giver: "Where is my gift?"

What an insult to the giver.

Your reliance on David disserves Christ.

If only you had tacked up a passage from Romans next to your computer instead of Psalms, you would not have been forced to "plod away" on a book proposing law-keeping as the answer to what you suppose to be sin. No wonder you plodded. I got depressed just reading your book; I cannot imagine the depression you must have felt writing it.

So now you propose to teach others the wonderful "liberty" you have stumbled upon by reading the Old Testament, attempting Mosaic law, begging for forgiveness, and ignoring the cross. How wonderful! Thank you for the offer of help, but we don't need it. You may as well tell us to build an ark, circumcise our sons on the eighth day, and explain to us the most efficient way to transport our sheep to Jerusalem.

Mr. Arterburn, you are stuck in the Stone Age. Your book would be helpful—if only you had written it in 1000 B.C. Unfortunately, it's 2017 A.D. You are only 3000 years behind the curve, Mr. Arterburn. No wonder you invite us to battle. You do not realize that the battle has been won. The war is over, Stephen. Wake up and smell the justification.

Wake up and stare at some really great bras.

(To be continued.)