

The background of the entire page is a high-angle photograph of a deep, narrow fjord in Norway. The water is a calm, light blue, reflecting the sky. The surrounding mountains are steep and covered in green forest, with some rocky peaks visible. In the foreground, on the left, a large, dark, flat rock outcrop extends over the water. Two people, a man and a woman, are standing on the edge of this rock, holding hands and looking out over the fjord. The man is on the left, wearing a dark shirt and shorts, and the woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored shirt and shorts. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

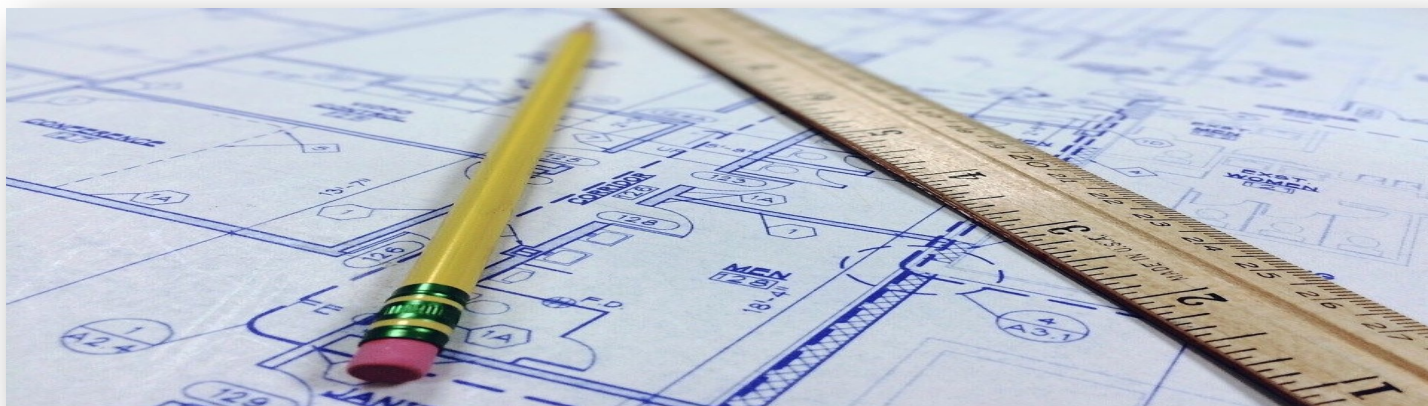
BLUEPRINTS

Reflecting God's Image Outside of Eden

September 2023

"When You Think You Can't" (p. 10)
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"A Pondering Mother's Heart" (p. 14)
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Blueprints

September 2023, Volume 5, Issue 7

Blueprints offers a bold message of original intent, which is that plan, purpose, and design God has inscribed into the heart of His men and women.

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Blueprints For Living Ministries, Inc. was birthed out of a preaching firestorm that occurred in "God's Country" (aka Hondo, TX) in 2011. Led by Jason Cole and Ruben Constante, Jr., this preaching revival stirred hundreds of men to seek God's will and purpose for their lives.

Two years later, Ruben created this ministry's newsletter, called Blueprints, which would become its first outreach platform.

By 2015, Ruben finalized this ministry's current curriculum, which is neatly organized into five blueprints. During those four years, God had initiated Ruben through a rigorous testing and refining process, which placed him in several crises of faith. These trial periods became pivotal moments in which he learned to cultivate God's design for his life.

Blueprints For Living Ministries, Inc. now stands as a clear voice in a world that has erased and redefined God's blueprint for humanity. What began as a few sermons from behind a prison pulpit is now a team of dedicated men who are driven to impart spiritual and secular education that promotes positive change and personal growth and development.

It is a call for a return to original intent.



Five Blueprints For Living

1. The Blueprint of God's Image
2. The Blueprint of Gender Design
3. The Blueprint of Marriage
4. The Blueprint of the Church
5. The Blueprint of Discipleship



PILLARS OF TRUTH

Because Blueprints For Living Ministries, Inc. is dedicated to standing on and proclaiming God's original intent for life, we center our worldview on the only standard which reveals original intent: the Holy Bible.

Aside from affirming the Nicene and Apostle's creed, we adhere to the Reformed positions of the Christian faith, those doctrines which the reformers believed were central to Christianity. We stand alongside Martin Luther, who boldly refused to recant the clear teachings of Scripture. Therefore, we stand on the Five *Solas* of the Protestant Reformation:

1. Sola Scriptura ("Scripture alone"): The Bible is our highest authority.
2. Sola Fide ("faith alone"): We are saved through faith alone in Christ Jesus.
3. Sola Gratia ("grace alone"): We are saved by the grace of God alone.
4. Solus Christus ("Christ alone"): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.
5. Soli Deo Gloria ("to the glory of God alone"): We live for the glory of God alone.

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From the Desk of Ruben



It's not always easy standing up for what you believe in when the stakes are high.

Recently, I shared some very profound thoughts with a Blueprints class regarding this very thing. It seems that our culture is creeping more and more into our Christian faith and causing many Christians to turn a blind eye to the compromises we see occurring. For some reason, political dialogue seems to dominate the airwaves nowadays, and, because no one wants to “get into politics,” many important issues aren't addressed from a biblical standpoint.

But here's a newsflash for you: There are no political ideas that are not first moral concepts. Every political issue we see wrecking our world today is first a moral idea that one party pushes onto the world. As I told my stepdaughter one time, “Homosexuality isn't a political idea; it's a moral one.”

Don't lose sight of the fight we are currently engaged in today. It's not political. It's moral.

Ruben Constantino Jr.



The *Sin* I Hate

Ruben Constante, Jr.

Seems I am cursed with not having a "normal" sleep schedule as I am waking up pretty much every other morning anywhere from 2:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m.



Today, I flipped through old prison photos, revisiting all the years of turmoil and disappointment and setback. I recalled how hard it had been for me and how many times I was scared, not knowing if I was going to make it out of prison alive.

Then I reflected on how many mistakes I have made out here (and how many I stubbornly continue to make!), and I just fell to my knees with my Bible open. "Lord, save a wretch like me!"

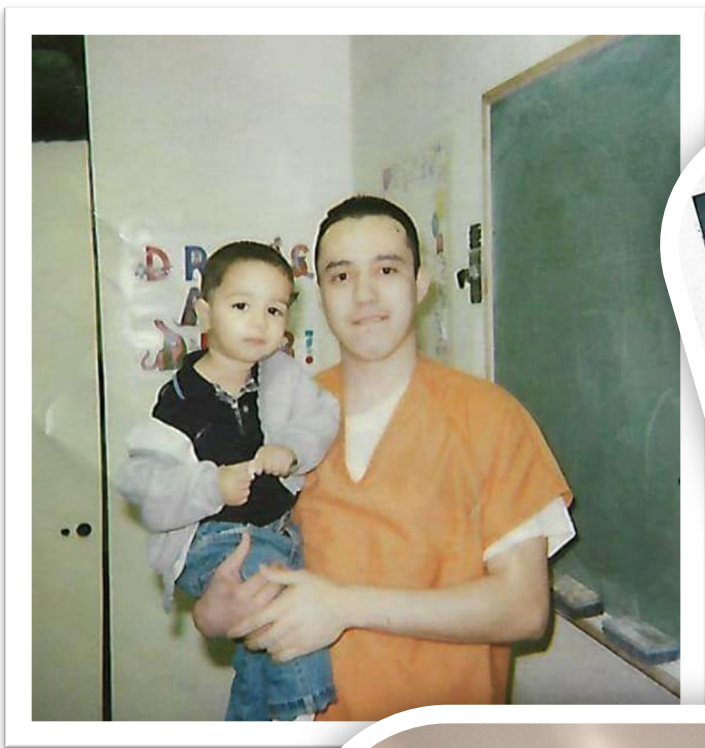
I hate the sin that lingers. I hate the flesh that won't go away. I hate the effects it has on my family and on how I easily misrepresent who God is. I hate not reflecting God's image the way I am supposed to.

And as I answered this inmate's I-60 to join the next Blueprints class, I remained still. In wonder. Like, how in the world is this happening? Why, after all the evils I've committed and after how badly I have misrepresented God out here, do I find myself answering an inmate request form to join a class I am now teaching?

As cliched as it may sound, yes, it is because of God. But you have to really understand how wicked you truly are to get a firm grasp of how great His grace and mercy is. You have to really know the depths of your depravity to sincerely marvel at His unsearchable grace.

"Thank You, my Lord, for saving---and continuing to save---a wretch like me!"





Five Essential Disciplines of Faith: Service, part 4: The Productivity of Service

Adrian Pasillas

In Luke 19:12-27, Jesus tells a parable about productivity (even nascent capitalism, if you will), as it pertains to stewardship and service, manifestly undergirded with forestalling immediate gratification. Essentially, we are called to invest in the future so that our investment may grow.



He tells a story of a rich master (an allusion to the protestation of the inept Archeleus [five times “removed” precursor to Pontius Pilate] to Caesar Augustus), who has to go away, reminiscent of Jesus’ ascension into heaven leaving behind the treasures that we have during His absence. And what did our LORD say, in effect? “When I come back, I expect to find that which I have given you has gained in value, manifest of the progress made by productive servants.” We may be “unprofitable,” but that doesn’t mean we’re to be *unproductive*. Jesus called out a single vote “referendum”, as it were, *to serve*, with His children to be galvanized into action, with alacrity. Procrastination (the opposite of alacrity), with a cavalier attitude (as shown by the one who socked away the minas), was never an option,

This is a weighty parable of service. Ultimately, it shows that one of the worst things we can do, short of showing manifest inertia as a disciple, is to waste the gifts that God has given us.

“This is how we should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they found faithful.” 1 Cor. 4:1-2 (ESV)

A steward in the ancient world was someone who was given the responsibility to manage the household. The chief requirement of the steward was fidelity.

“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the LORD who judges me. Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the LORD comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purpose of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.” (1 Cor. 4:3-5)

So Paul says that his stewardship and his service are not to be judged by men. The value of my stewardship, for example, will be judged by Christ and not by human beings.

Our servanthood should require no supervision, no need to have someone looking over our shoulders to ensure that we are working and, much more, be reminded of. Our task is to please Christ, not perform merely for the applause of people. People-pleasers cannot be true servants of Christ.

Consider Sept. 11, 2001, and the World Trade Center. In the midst of chaos and confusion, people were veritably “running for the hills”, trying to escape as quickly as they can from “Ground Zero”. Even in the buildings, people were fleeing down staircases in terror from the jet crash sites. But firefighters and others were running up into the beginning conflagration. It is quite evident that they were not people pleasers. Their service was authentic.

Christian service is not limited to any denomination or times of great crisis. It is a sacred call to every Christian...at all times.

Next: Stewardship



WHEN YOU THINK YOU CAN'T

Brittany Gray



Life is not always what it seems. Especially on social media. We tend to show the fast fun times with our hair in the wind and skip over the speed bumps or storms we have to cross through to get there.

What looks like a fun vacation and couple's getaway was actually a work trip with an hour stop for dinner. I was so tired, I barely made it down these steps to take this picture.

God reminded me of something while I was there.

The best part about being a believer is knowing when you feel overwhelmed or stressed. You do whatever it is you can, and God will handle the rest. We as humans, every single one of us who is willing - are so blessed to have that privilege!

Society wants to convince you that you are alone, and no one will help you or push you to your next step. They want to brainwash you and remind you of your limitations and oppressions.

But it is a lie.

The inner strength inside of you is just waiting for you to surrender whatever it is you see as a mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual block and call out to your Creator. The earth will tremble at the sound of His name!

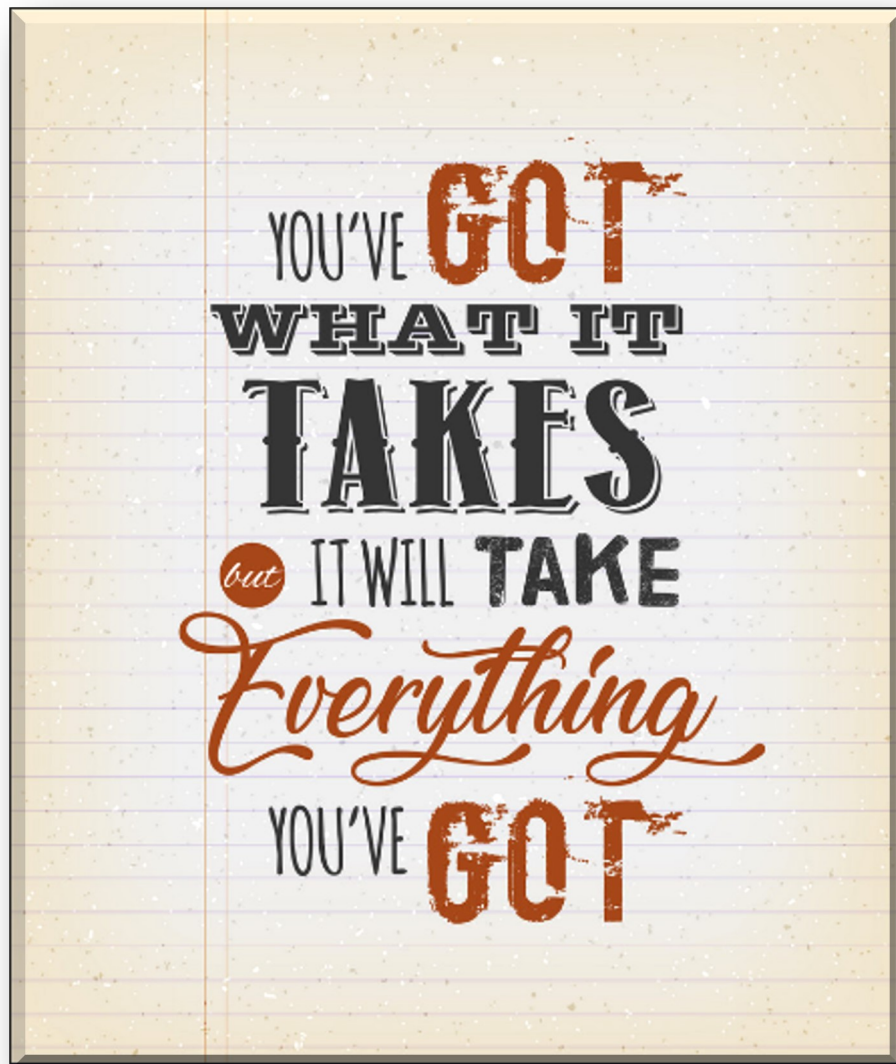
He built this world in 6 days and rested the 7th!

He doesn't expect any of us to push so hard we break. That point right before you think you're about to break is the place where you get to see who and what He is all about! We are *all* made in His image to reflect the billions of different possibilities He can produce. That problem you can't possibly see or cry your way out of, God already worked out. You don't need to change everything about yourself to fit in or pretend like something bad didn't happen.

You just have to ask Him to show you what's next.

If there is anything I hope this world can take from me, it is to see the messes I've made, and the miracles God brought out of them. Not by my good deeds or even my efforts. Simply by His grace.

Keep going! He isn't finished with you yet!





The Forgotten Harvest

Israel Garza

My name is pastor Israel. For the past few weeks, we have had the privilege to minister to the men at the Cotulla and Briscoe Unit. Unlike other pastors that shepherd a church in the free world as we know it, we pastor the Church, the Body of Christ within the razor wire.

Just this past Sunday we had fellowship with the men and together we prayed before I gave the message. There is a call for all of us to see the harvest and not pick and choose where we decide to labor, but to listen to the call of God over our lives. As we read in the 9th chapter of Matthew, Jesus here explains not only the compassion He felt for the lost, but the need for them to be shepherded. And beyond that He saw the harvest was not only in front of Him but throughout the land (Matt. 9:35-38).

As we enter the prison, we don't see convicts, or men of heinous crimes, but broken men seeking their true identity, yearning for their purpose and hungry for the wisdom of God.

Our harvest is the one that is neglected, the one that is in the eyes of so many Christians judged and beyond their compassion. Yet God working in our very heart has called us to, "Go." Go to them, to their families, to their children that are the next generation.

Each unit has its own Body with its own identity. Their praise is different, their worship different, and they each have a heart to surrender to God. The joy to see them ask, seek and find comfort in God's Word, correction and counsel. The men sit eagerly at their doorways in the dorms waiting for service to be called, looking forward to sitting and having some godly fellowship.

Do we out here in the freedom of the world run to the church, do we anticipate the fellowship of the saints? Or perhaps we are with the belief that we have more than enough of God? That the saints that we share company with aren't good enough, annoying or even boring.

My friends, we must take a page from the chapter of incarcerated men. This page is

filled with gratitude, thanksgiving and humility. This is a love letter, a reminder that you too are the apple of God's eye, that you too were in a place of solitude, fear and confusion. Yet God in His Love, Mercy and Grace sent someone to you. To embrace you with His Word, His Peace, His Rest. May the men never forget of what Harvest they come from, like so many others have. 🌱

"Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out Laborers into His harvest."

(Matt. 9:37,38)



A Pondering Mother's Heart

Penny Constante

I think one of the hardest things in life is knowing that death is inevitable and can come to anyone at any time.

When my mom passed away a few months ago it was sudden and devastating. She was not able to say her good-byes and tell us that she loves us (although we knew she did, of course). I tried to imagine myself in her position, lying in a hospital bed, sedated and intubated, listening to loved ones in a dream-like state, hearing them cry and say their goodbyes, and knowing my time to die was here, and I am scared and powerless. I wouldn't be able to move or speak while my body shuts off and everything ends. No more laughing, smelling, feeling, or enjoying life. Gone forever from this world.

A piece of me died with her that day.

This had put me in such a deep sadness. On top of that, I had to transfer her ashes to an urn which had literally given me such an intense heartache that I sought medical attention because I wasn't sure exactly what was going on with me. I was losing my light. I was in a funk, lost my joy, and didn't quite care about life much because dying weighed heavy on my mind and heart. It was all I could think about.

But I didn't want to be a dead woman walking, living as if I had already died. I didn't want to live as if nothing mattered. So, something had to change.

And of all places I could have found some solace, it was on Facebook. I had seen a meme that helped me adjust my thoughts. It was Charlie Brown and Snoopy. Charlie Brown said, "We only live once, Snoopy."

"Wrong!" Snoopy said. "We only die once. We live every day!"

So, with the time we are blessed to be given, we need to enjoy it. Take it all in. Love a lot. Let go of grudges and hatred. Enjoy each day and know it's a blessing. Not everyone is blessed to make it to old age. Some are not blessed to make it passed the womb.

So, with each passing day that my little family and I are given, I am thankful. I will live every day, knowing that I am blessed. 🖤





Masturbation—is it a sin according to the Bible?

The Bible does not mention masturbation or self-gratification or “solo sex,” as it’s sometimes called. In its silence on the subject, the Bible does not state whether or not masturbation is a sin. Some people take the view that masturbation is a lustful act and is always wrong; others believe it involves a normal bodily function and has nothing to do with sin.

A passage frequently associated with masturbation is the story of Onan in Genesis 38:9–10. Some interpret this passage to say that “spilling seed”—the squandering of semen—is a sin. However, that is not what the passage is saying. God condemned Onan not for “spilling his seed” but because Onan was rebellious. Onan refused to fulfill his duty to provide an heir for his deceased brother. The passage is not about masturbation but about fulfilling a family obligation.

A second passage sometimes used as evidence that masturbation is a sin is Matthew 5:27–30. Jesus speaks against having lustful thoughts and then says, “If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.” While there is often a connection between lustful thoughts and masturbation, it is unlikely that Jesus was alluding to the specific sin of masturbation in this passage.

Though the Bible nowhere explicitly addresses masturbation, it does outline the purpose of sex. According to 1 Corinthians 7:2–5, “Each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” Implicit in this passage are these truths:

- God’s plan for sex requires relationship, namely, that of a husband and wife (verse 2). Masturbation is sex disconnected from relationship.
- Foundational to God’s plan for sex is giving one’s body to another (verse 4). Masturbation is the keeping

of one's body to oneself.

- The solution to a time of deprivation is to “come together” (verse 5). Masturbation is done alone, not together.

First Corinthians 7:9 identifies the proper outlet for single people who struggle with sexual desire: “If they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” Paul suggests that self-control is the best avenue. To singles who lack self-control, Paul does not say, “Let them masturbate”; he says, “Let them marry.” Again, marriage is the God-given outlet for sexual yearnings.

Those who believe that masturbation has no moral or ethical import argue that masturbation is a “need” akin to the need to eat or the need to scratch an itch. However, the Bible never presents sexual fulfillment as a need. On the contrary, Paul says to the unmarried, “It’s better to stay unmarried” (1 Cor. 7:8, NLT).

Certain actions often associated with masturbation are sinful and should be dealt with: lustful thoughts, inappropriate sexual stimulation, and pornography use, for example. If these problems are tackled, masturbation becomes less of a temptation. Many people struggle with guilt concerning masturbation, when, in reality, they would be better off repenting of the sins that lead them to masturbate.

So, is masturbation a sin? The Bible does not directly answer this question, but there definitely are some biblical principles to apply:

(1) “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). If we cannot give God glory for something, we should not do it.

(2) “Everything that does not come from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). If we are not fully convinced that an activity is honoring to God, it is a sin.

(3) “I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Corinthians 6:12). Christians have a responsibility to avoid anything that might enslave them.

(4) “I discipline my body and keep it under control” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Self-denial is difficult, but self-discipline is worth it.

(5) “The fruit of the Spirit is . . . self-control” (Galatians 5:22–23). Masturbation is almost always a sign of a *lack* of self-control.

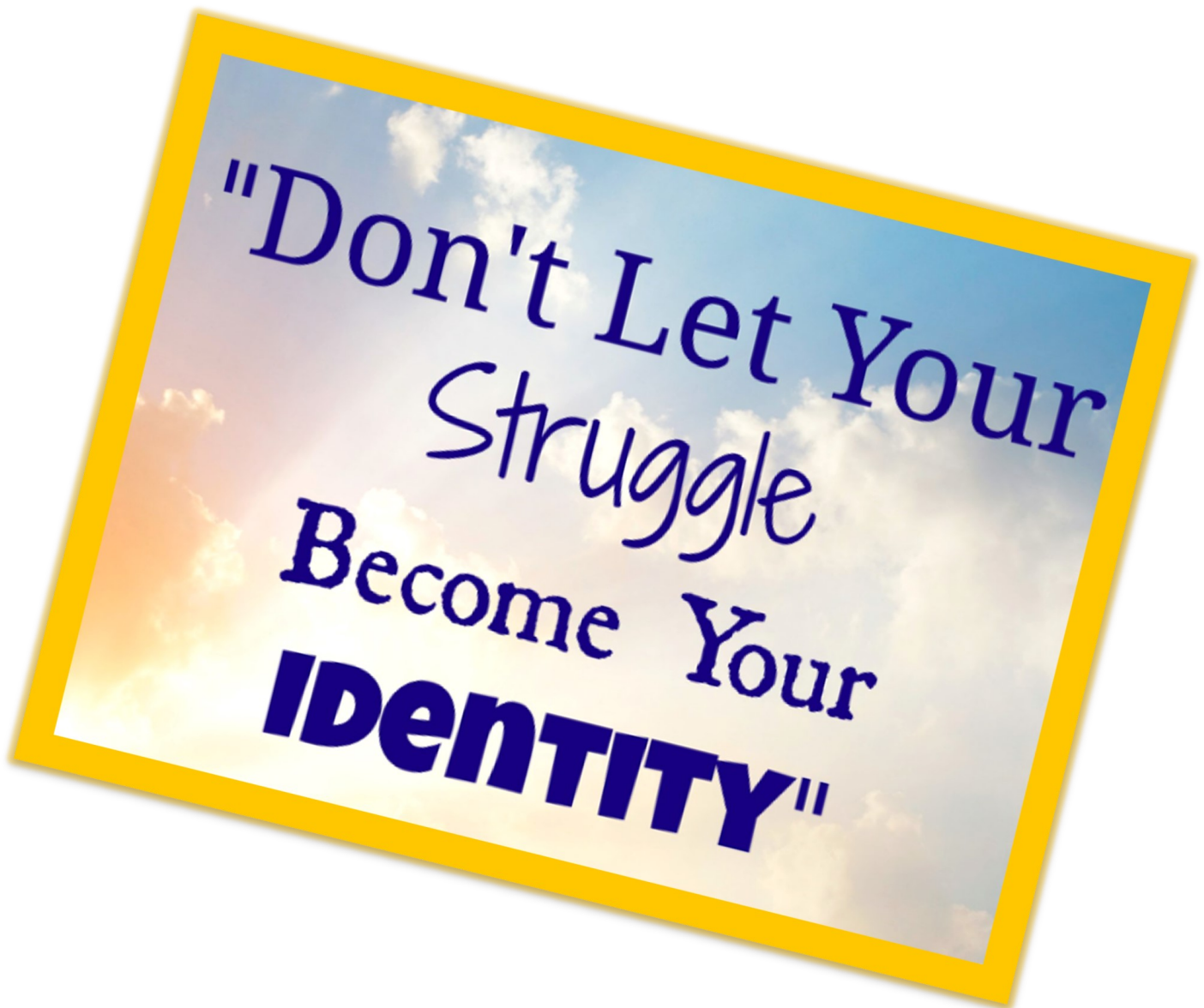
(6) Do “not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want” (Galatians 5:16–17). We are called to self-denial, not to self-gratification.

These truths should have an impact on what we do with our bodies. In light of the above principles, it is doubtful that masturbation can be a God-honoring activity. If masturbation could be done with. . .

- no lust in the heart
- no immoral thoughts
- no pornography
- no self-gratification of the flesh
- full assurance that it is good and right
- thanks given to God

then perhaps it would be allowable. But those qualifiers seem to negate the very meaning and purpose of masturbation.

This article was taken from Got Questions and can be viewed at <https://www.gotquestions.org/masturbation-sin.html>



Accepted in the Beloved

Michele Regino

Hi, my name is Michelle. I'm from San Angelo, TX I'm 42 years old and I just want to share a small piece of myself with you. Hoping that you will be touched as I was.

I'm the oldest out of five children. I'm the only child from my mom's 1st marriage. I didn't grow up with my dad or feeling the love that's always being spoken about from parents. My mother abused me physically, mentally, verbally, etc. At the age of 11 I ended up skipping school breaking into a house & I got locked up in juvenile. It was a way to be free from my mom. Well, she had no problem to let the system know she didn't want me. So, from there I eventually ended up state custody. From the girls home, boot camp, to a ranch---until my 18th birthday.

After I got released, I didn't have a place to live. I ended up getting into a relationship that lasted 9 ½ years. But along with that I ended up drinking, & drugging. My life was spiraling down fast. Meth became my choice of drug. I was immune & addicted. I was in & out of jail. My life ended up at a point I never imagined. I was in abusive relationships, four major car wrecks, I've od'd (twice that I can remember). And all I can say is God's grace kept me alive.

In 2016 I ended up in jail for the last time. But I remember that time very well. I was in lock down and I remember I couldn't sleep one night. So, I grabbed the Bible and randomly opened it up. Pointing my finger to wherever & read. Not knowing that what I was about to read was going to have a major impact in my heart & life. I read:

"I am a Father to the fatherless."

Psalm 68:5

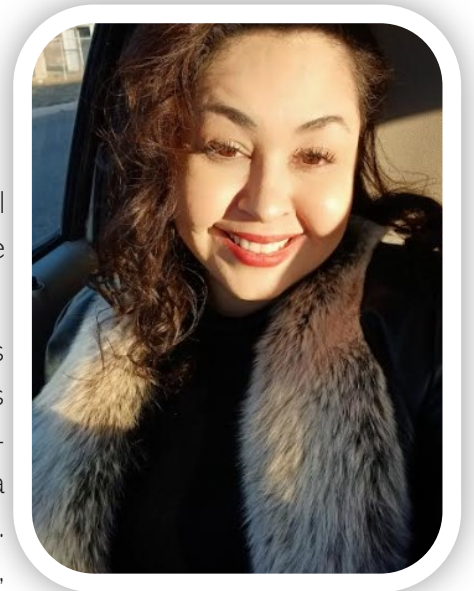
I shut my Bible, pondering on that.

"Well, I don't have a dad, are You my father?" I asked. And I felt a warmth in my heart. I was touched.

I wanted to do it again, so I did. Opened the Bible randomly & I got: "There are many rooms in my Father's house. If this were not true, would I have told you that I am going there? Would I have told you that I would prepare a place for you there?" (Jn. 14:2)

All I ever wanted was a safe place to rest. I felt alone for so long. I have been rejected by family, friends, companions. I have had doors shut in my face. I have been kicked out of homes so many times. But here Jesus tells us that in His Father's house there are many rooms. And there is a room for you & me. A safe place. A room. In heaven we have a home. Jesus is not a liar. God doesn't lie. God is our Father if we will only accept him into our life.

I believe that every person who is born has a room in heaven. But many rooms will be empty because they will be the ones who rejected Christ Jesus. Then there are us who take the narrow road & accepted Jesus.



We have been born again & seek Him with all our strength daily. Allowing Him to have His way in our hearts & life.

I know I'm tired of doing it my way. My way never works out for the good. I need the help of the Holy Ghost. I cried out and God heard me. He has restored my real dad into my life & I couldn't be happier. God has healed my body & delivered me from drugs, alcohol, pride, and many other things. The Bible says we must be born again. (John 3:5-7)

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6).

"Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. The Kingdom of heaven belongs to them (Matt. 5:10)

Today I am just simply trying to be a better person. Yes, God has delivered me from drugs etc. But I just want Him to help clean my heart & renew my mind daily. I want to desire more of Him & less of the things in this world. I have no desire to go back to where God pulled me out of. But I do have a desire to share with others of God's love & goodness.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through Him" (Jn. 3:16-17).

"God has a plan for your life" (Jer. 29:11).

"You are God's chosen. His treasured possession" (Deut. 7:6).

"Jesus chose you" (Jn. 15:16).

Rest knowing that God's got you. I hear those chains falling. In the mighty name of Jesus be set free. Amen! You are enough, so believe in yourself. 

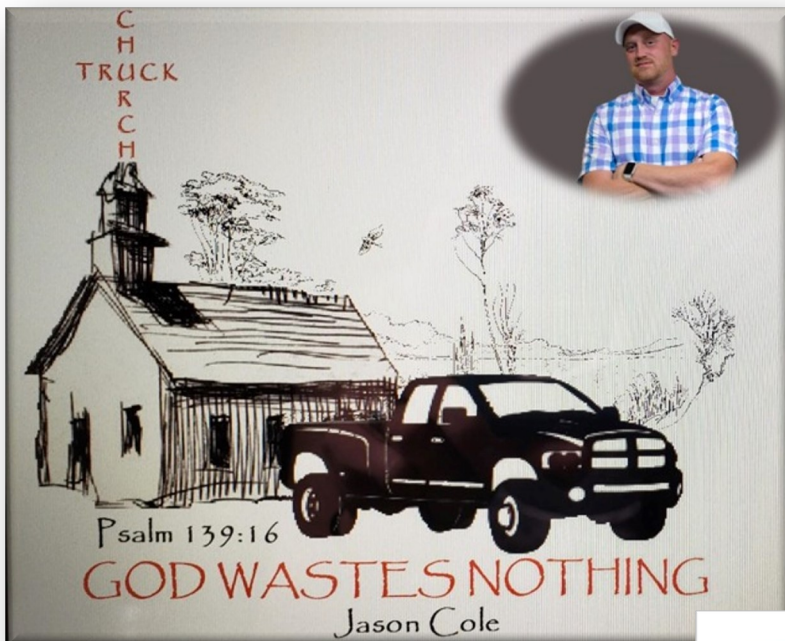


The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of principles to be obeyed apart from identification with Jesus Christ. The Sermon on the Mount is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is getting his way with us.

— Oswald Chambers —

AZ QUOTES

A special thanks to these faithful
ministries and organizations
who make our graduation classes possible!





TO CONFORM OR NOT CONFORM?

In a morally relativistic world, it's rare to see the Church oppose doctrines that conflict with the clear teaching of Scripture. Part of this is due to our being conformed to the American zeitgeist. Sadly, plenty of souls in the Church are blinded by the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4).

But this wasn't always the case.

When the apostles died, the "Fathers" of the Church took on the responsibility of proclaiming and protecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church Fathers have been placed into three categories, each due to the historical context in which they lived. There were the Apostolic Fathers, Ante-Nicene Church Fathers and Post-Nicene Church Fathers.

During each stage of Church history, they all defended the faith from various forms of heresy. They did this in fulfillment of what the apostle Paul wrote the Ephesian elders in Acts chapter 20. The "savage wolves" he warned them about are the people who arise within the church. Our greatest foe is that which is within the church, not outside of it.

Today's Church is being assaulted on many fronts, but the biggest threat is the liberalized culture that has infected every aspect of society. When the apostle Paul commanded the Roman church to not be conformed to this world, we can now see why that mandate was so crucial.

Whether you are a Protestant or a Catholic, our Christian values are being maligned and misrepresented. It is our duty to stand for truth. We must continue what the Church Fathers began. As the Bride of Christ, we are not only to proclaim the risen Lord, but we are to protect the Truths He died for.

The question remains, then: Will you oppose this liberalized culture? Or will you conform to it?

My Passion for the Prisoner

Ruben Constante, Jr.

A few years ago, I was part of a group called Project 180 composed of ex-felons who visited the Torres unit in Hondo, Texas. We had all served time at Torres, and we wanted to share our experiences with our former friends with whom we had served time. It was a bit strange returning to the unit at which I had served 15 of my 18 years, but within minutes the nervousness dissipated, and I spoke about one of my favorite topics, the victim mentality. The article that was posted on the WSD website summarized my talk as follows:

Ruben Constante was the next presenter. With a practiced cadence and a flair for public speaking, he addressed the dangers of a "victim mentality," speaking to students about family and examining attitudes.

"The victim mentality is the most toxic, self-defeating, destructive mentality you can have," he said. "It does three things. First, it disempowers you. When you blame someone else, you forfeit power. Oftentimes, in our humanity, we do things to try to compensate for what was



'taken' from us. Secondly, it incapacitates you and makes you feel unable to do anything about your situation. Lastly, it embitters you. You start hating people. You're angry all the time. You're mad because you got a set-off, didn't get a letter, or didn't get commissary money. You feel the whole world is conspiring against your existence. The truth is the world doesn't care about your existence; you have to care about your existence. People are not out to get you," he said.

"The biggest thing you're gonna fight is your attitude," he said. "The difference between a good day and a bad day is your attitude."

Upon release, Constante set out to write the books from notes scribbled in a journal during his prison tenure. At the time his Project 180° presentation at Torres, Constante had written and published three books, started a nonprofit organization and began a ministry, "pouring himself" into those who are still incarcerated.

"The value of sharpening another man goes way beyond these walls," he said.

Brothers and sisters in white, I'm telling you now: Stop being a victim. You become your worst enemy when you believe other people are responsible for whether you make it in life. Well, guess what? They're not. You are!

So get off the self-pity trip and get you some real power by owning up to your mistakes and making positive changes that will result in a life you and your family deserve. 🌍

Don't forget to stop by our social media sites to see more of what God is doing through our ministry.

