

“BLEEP” in the City 2: The ‘Lying Game’

by Jill A. Williams

In the beginning, God created man. Man was lonely, so he created woman. They got married, had many children and lived happily ever after. The end. (NOT.)

Life is not always as simple as it seems. Sex is never as simple as it seems. What we see in the media so often – jumping in bed after the first date (or even after the first ‘hello’) – is an extremely dangerous game people are playing with not only their physical health (#AidsIsStillAThing), but also with their heart and spiritual health. Our hearts are so precious to the Holy Spirit that He decided that *that* is where He (*God*) wishes to reside...to ensure that He can be the guardian and custodian over it. That should tell you something.

This is why we’ve dealt with one aspect of sex in today’s society in “‘Bleep’ in the City: The Lies We Tell Ourselves”. This second segment of the topic will dive a bit deeper into some of the ugliness that is experienced when sex is not used in its proper context. What happens when people misuse sex? What impacts does this have on our Church and society?

Game of Lies

One preacher defined ‘holiness’ as ‘unity’ because it entails purity and one-mindedness. YouCAT#403 reiterates that the framework of a true, dependable love is required for any sexual encounter. So when someone decides to forcefully engage in sex, that ‘one-mindedness’, and thus the unity of the act is not achieved. It then turns into a lie:

“When sexuality is separated from love and is sought only for the sake of satisfaction, one destroys the meaning of the sexual union of man and woman... People who look for sex without love are lying, because the closeness of their bodies does not correspond to the closeness of their hearts... Sex then becomes inhuman; it is degraded to a means of obtaining pleasure and degenerates into a commodity.”

YouCAT#403

Sex can be holy – if we use it at the right time and in the right context. In the book of

Genesis, we see this in the oneness of mind and spirit that Adam and Eve had (particularly before the ‘fall’). They knew each other so deeply, that even physical nakedness (vulnerability with each other) came naturally to them. Here we see that the sexual act cannot be a factor outside of marriage, because he/she whom you have united with and ‘known’ would then have no obligation to keep your vulnerabilities covered outside of covenant.

And then we get hit by tragedy

Residents in Pretoria East were shocked by reports of the alleged rape of a little girl by a man in the restrooms of a Dros restaurant last year. This incident went

viral soon afterwards. The nation was shocked that something so terrible happening to a little girl – innocently making her way to the bathroom. If that was not enough, the Omotoso case soon became greatly publicised; yet another case of a young woman allegedly being taken advantage of – this time, by a pastor she knew and was supposed to trust. These horrific stories tell of the results of perverting and idolising sex.

This and many other rape cases in recent times all happened with the backdrop of the “#MeToo” campaign where countless stories of abuse and sexual harassment were being told and uncovered, possibly for the first time ever. Would these perpetrators ever have faced the reality of their actions if these victims remained silent?

More than physical-

I recently had a chat with a co-worker about sexual harassment and assault in the workplace and he helped me realise that sometimes these forms of abuse are not so much about sex, but about claiming power and a sense of dominance over the victim. If the victim, blinded by the façade of “fatal attraction” agrees to have sex with the assailant, it would then just feed the assailant’s ego and add more layers and complication to the situation, especially for the victim. This is why some people get caught in vicious cycles of abuse that go unreported.

Together with this, the spiritual ties formed in these cycles of abuse lead to deep mental and spiritual wounds that last long after the abuse ends. Pastor Mike Todd speaks of the bonds formed during sex as a three-fold joining: joining physically through the act of sex, spiritually through covenant and emotionally through intimacy (hence the concept of “Soul-Ties”). Joyce Meyer openly speaks of her being sexually abused by her father. Through God’s intervention in her life, however, she was able to reclaim her life, sever the emotional and spiritual ties she was bound with, and forgive him. After many years of having to care for him, he later repented of his sin and came to know the Lord.

Scattering the flock

Our Church has been racked with scandal recently concerning some men of the cloth – supposed shepherds – (allegedly) sexually abusing members of the Church. Pope Francis spoke extensively about this as the ‘disfiguring’ nature of sin and how humiliating and painful such sins are, especially when performed by the people who are supposed to show (most prominently) who Christ is.

Through years of lying and deception, such cases went unnoticed. But even the darkness is as light to God (Psalm 139:12). It was necessary that these cases came to light so that our Church could learn how to deal more sensitively with victims of such abuses and to deal with the issue as a whole on a deeper level.

The Pope also emphasized that humility and prayer would be necessary to ensure that what was broken can be mended and restored in these situations, in the affected families and victims, and in society at large.

16 going on 365

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence is an international campaign running from 25 November until 10 December annually. It aims to draw people's attention to the silent battles and living hell faced by millions of people each moment.

It has been said that many perpetrators and assailants were once victims themselves, and that they were psychologically affected by this trauma. It has also been said that this resulted in their behaviour as an adult and, essentially, causing them to repeat the mistakes of the past. By increasing awareness on these matters, the chances of having people getting the help and psychological treatment they need, increases. This could possibly prevent another human being from becoming a statistic.

We need to be aware of and combat abuse throughout the year...not just when the media highlights it. If you are or know anyone who might be facing any form of abuse or harassment, please contact the following numbers: **Childline- 0800 055 555; FAMSA- 011 975 7101; Legal Aid South Africa- 0861 053 425; People Opposing Woman Abuse (POWA) - 083 765 1235**

Change is going to come

Sometimes we seem to forget about, or grow numb to, the abuse and misuse of power through sexual violence, harassment and other forms of violence. My aunt taught me recently that we **MUST** feel this pain as if it were our own. God does not want us to grow numb or cold. By always placing ourselves in the shoes of another, our hearts stay malleable and open to helping our brothers and sisters in whatever way we can, in order for them to experience healing. The book of Galatians refers to the 'Life in the Spirit' (Gal 5:13-26). It relates how to live out our freedom...as a freedom to be **FREE**... Not to be loosed from one addiction, so we can be bound to another. We need to rest our hearts in a sure hope in order to exit cycles in our lives that could end up destroying us.

One Crosswalk.com blogger relayed the following tips to her son to prevent abuse (Thesman, n.d.):

1. Respect the women/men in your life
2. Teach your sons and daughters how to treat women/men
3. Make sure your workplace has a no-tolerance policy towards sexual misconduct and supports sexual harassment training
4. Keep your mind pure
5. Pray for Global Change towards healthy views on sex and sexuality
6. Be proactive to protect victims
7. Give to organizations that help affected men and women
8. Share healthy posts on social media

Holy and Sanctified

The misuse of sex is far from the great plan God put in place for our lives. Sex is holy. Abuse is not. Each of us have the ability and responsibility to ensure that our physical and spiritual environments promote healthy relationships and not abuse (in any form). Not for a #Hashtag, retweet, like or follow, but for the sake of being active agents in God's work of sanctification and renewal of our very selves unto Himself.