

LOVE IN ACTION

finding freedom in Jesus Christ from sexual and relational sin



Do You Trust Me With Your Child?

by **David Jones**, LIA Counselor



Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock (Isaiah 26: 4, NLT).

There are crucial times in our lives when God asks the question, “Do you trust me?” One of these times occurs as our children move toward and step into adulthood. We still remember them as small, helpless infants that needed our constant care and protection. Because of our adult position and life experiences, we know the danger and temptations that lie before them. This awareness often leads us into fear-based responses that result in our trying to control things that are out of our control. Feeling powerless to stop or control the outcome produces frustration toward our children, ourselves, other loved ones and even toward God. “If they would just listen to me, I could save them from a lot of heartache and pain” is often a place we go to when they “just won’t do right.” This process is accelerated and exacerbated when our adult or near-adult

children are choosing to pursue sexual sin. Whether this sexual sin is adultery, promiscuity, pornography, or homosexuality, it still results in a broken heart for the loving parent.

There is a strange phenomenon that occurs when our children choose to sin: as parents, we feel and experience shame and guilt. “What did I do wrong or how did I fail?” is a common question among hurting parents. This question will often send us into an obsessive loop of thinking that will propel parents into the world of “shoulda, woulda, and coulda.” “I shoulda seen this coming,” or, “I woulda done something to stop it,” or, “I coulda helped!” The world of “shoulda, woulda, coulda” will lead us into the land of Regretville. The land of Regretville presses us into trying to fix or correct the self-perceived errors of our past. Many parents will read every book available on sexual and relational sin. This often leads to confirmation that they have failed as a parent, because the experts writing the books describe parental failures in detail.

The aforementioned shame and guilt will produce works-based righteousness. In other words, “if I broke it then I must fix it.” As parents, we all fail; and sometimes we fail badly. However, shaming ourselves and trying to “fix” things through our own abilities will not change anything or anybody. I have interacted with many parents who have become the Mayor of Regretville as well as the CEO of Shame City. I am not trying to make light of the serious subject of rebellious children, nor am I minimizing the hurt and pain that a parent experiences when a loved one chases sexual perversion. One thing is clear, however, that we can not effect change in anyone else while we are living in the regret and shame of the past. We yearn to see revival occur in the lives of our children, but we do not have the ability to change or revive anyone. We can, however, ask God to change us. If I am carrying fear, regret, shame and guilt then God can’t use me.

Dealing with a rebellious child will involve tremendous courage and fortitude. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV) If we are walking in agreement with a spirit of fear then we will not have the power and strength needed to deal with the rebellious child. “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1a, NIV) If I am carrying shame,

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guilt and regret, then I am walking in agreement with condemnation and not His truth. In dealing with rebellion, parents also need to be able to set effective boundaries. However, effective boundaries have to be empowered; you cannot enforce or empower boundaries while carrying a foundation of shame, guilt and regret.

Jesus had a strange interaction with a crippled man by the Pool of Bethesda in which he asked the man if he wanted to be healed. Jesus also came to set the captives free, and all parents of children trapped in or pursuing sexual sin want their child to be healed and set free from the bonds of sin. Jesus never forced healing or freedom on anyone: they got to choose. You can love your child more than any parent has ever loved their child but you can't choose for them. We have to come to a place of trusting that God loves our children more than we do and that his love can change, heal and free them. As a parent, you too can choose to let God heal you and to set you free. Is there hurt and pain that needs His healing touch? Do you need to be set free from the bonds of fear, shame, guilt and regret? When God asks you, "Do you trust me with your child?", will you surrender them into God's care just as Abraham did with Isaac? Or will you continue to live in fear and try to control and manipulate your child into change? Surrendering your child to God does not mean giving up. It means that I realize my human love has limits and boundaries and I am trusting God with the things I am powerless to change.

Dealing with a child struggling with sexual sin can be devastating and at times overwhelming. It is not a journey that should be taken alone, but it can be difficult to find others who understand and have walked this path before you. Through our *Family Freedom Intensive* workshop, we can walk with you through this journey. Our intent is to give parents not only the tools they need in dealing with this issue but also to give a message of hope. Our God is the God of hope, healing and restoration.

For more information on our programs, please visit us online at www.loveinaction.org.

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