

Leadership and Sexual Integrity

It is a tragic reality that many Christian leaders fall into sexual immorality, with the result that their ministry has to come to an end and the cause of the gospel is dishonoured. This talk will examine the particular challenges to sexual integrity that are encountered in Christian leadership. Why do pastoral leadership and the service of the Lord so often seem to be a context for strong sexual temptations? How does sexual temptation manifest itself at different life-stages of the Christian leader? Only if we appreciate these dangers will we be able to guard against them.

John Stevens is the National Director of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, a family of over 500 Bible-centred churches in the UK, a position that he has held since 2010. Prior to this he was one of the founding pastors of City Evangelical Church Birmingham, which was planted in the centre of the UK's 2nd largest city in 1999. He was instrumental in starting the Midlands Gospel Partnership, was the course Director of the Midlands Ministry Training Course and is a visiting lecturer at Oak Hill Theological College. John is also one of the pastors of Christchurch Market Harborough, a church he helped to plant when he took up his current role. He was converted whilst studying law at Cambridge University, and after taking a post-graduate degree at the University of Oxford worked for 16 years as a University Lecturer, ending his career as Deputy Head of the Law School at the University of Birmingham. John is married to Ursula and they have four children aged between 12 and 7. He blogs at www.john-stevens.com on theology, church life and ministry, culture and politics.

I. High Profile Ministry Falls

A. Why did they happen?

B. What can we learn?

II. Biblical Paradigms of Sexual Immorality

A. Judah – Genesis 38:12-19

B. Israel – Numbers 25:1-18

C. David – 2 Samuel 11:1-26

D. Amnon – 2 Samuel 13:1-22

III. The Biblical Standard of Sexual Integrity

A. Actions and passions of the heart – Mark 7:21-23

B. Sexual immorality (porneia) – Genesis 2:24; Leviticus 18; 1 Corinthians 5:9

- C. Lust – Matthew 5:27-28
 - D. Faithfulness – 1 Timothy 3:2
 - E. Singleness – 1 Corinthians 7:25-40
 - F. Same-sex attraction
- IV. The Biblical Standard of Sexual Integrity for Ministry
- A. 1 Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:6
- V. Common Sexual Failings of Christian Leaders
- A. Emotional attachments/fantasies
 - B. Pornography
 - C. Prostitution
 - D. Casual sex
 - E. Long-term affairs
 - F. Divorce and remarriage
 - G. Frustrated marriage
- VI. Why Are Christian Leaders Especially Susceptible to Sexual Sin?
- A. Our flesh remains fallen – Romans 7:14-24
 - B. We are in a spiritual battle – Ephesians 6:10-20

C. Satan seeks to discredit the gospel

D. The unique opportunities of ministry – Abusing your position

1. Power over others
2. Attractiveness of leadership status to others
3. Engagement with vulnerable and needy people
4. Closeness with co-workers in ministry

E. The common pressures of ministry – Alleviating your neediness

1. Loneliness
2. Emotional exhaustion & emptiness
3. Tensions in marriage/home

VII. Specific Dangers at Different States of Life

A. Age and stage

1. Single and searching
2. Newly married without children
3. Married with young children
4. Middle-aged

B. Level of ministry

1. Young and starting out
2. Up and coming leader
3. Reached the pinnacle of leadership
4. Reach the top and nowhere else to go

Suggested Readings:

Adrian & Celia Reynolds, *Glorious Union: Flourishing in Ministry and Marriage*, 10Publishing

Kris Lundgaard, *The Enemy Within*, Presbyterian & Reformed

Christopher Ash, *Marriage: Sex in the Service of God*, IVP

Stephen Arterburn, *Every Man's Battle*, Waterbrook Multnomah

Tim Chester, *Captured by a Better Vision*, IVP

Glynn Harrison, *A Better Story*, IVP

Gordon MacDonald, *Rebuilding Your Broken World*, Highland Books

<http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2017/03/a-pastoral-letter-to-myself-in.php>

John Armstrong, *The Stain That Stays: The Church's response to the sexual misconduct of its leaders*, Mentor