Dealing with co-dependency and unequal relationships

**Focus Point:** To help you identify and end relationships which do not bring glory to God or contribute positively to your Christian living.

**Word Knowledge—**
- **Soul**—the immaterial part of man which comprises the faculties of thought, actions and emotions. The soul is immortal and governs one's emotional and moral natures.
- **Jealousy**—extreme apprehension of the loss of another's affections.
- **Relationship**—a biological, natural or spiritual association between two or more people.

God created all people with a healthy desire to depend on others in various forms of relationships. On the job, you depend on co-workers to achieve company goals. At home, you depend on family members to do their fair share in keeping the home livable and peaceable. In the church we depend on our brothers and sisters for encouragement and support in doing the work of the ministry. Even in marriage, there is a certain dependency on a spouse to “do their part” in making the marriage what it should be. But sometimes relationships can cross over the line of normal dependency and become dangerous, addictive and sinful. The Holy Spirit expects us to and will help us identify and end relationships which are spiritually unhealthy. Codependency in its clinical sense is a psychological condition or a relationship in which a person is controlled or manipulated by another person affected with a pathological condition. Co-dependency negatively affects your emotions, attitudes and value systems because you allow another person to think and determine what is right for you. Codependency can also known as “soul ties.” An ungodly soul tie occurs when there is an unlawful captivation of another's will or the relinquishing of one's will to another. Sexual activity between two individuals out side of the marriage covenant can create such ties.

**Recognizing Signs and Evidence of Improper Soul Ties**

The first step in dealing with codependent relationships is to identify the signs of marking unhealthy relationships.

- One or the other person displays frequent jealousy, possessiveness and a desire for exclusivism, viewing other people as a threat to the relationship.
- Prefers to spend time alone with this friend and becomes frustrated when this does not happen.
- Loses interest in friendships other than this one.
- Experiences romantic or sexual feelings leading to unresolved fantasies about this person.
- Becomes preoccupied with this person's appearance, personality problems and interests.
- Is unwilling to make short or long range plans unless they include the other person.
- Is unable to see the other's faults realistically.
- Becomes defensive about the relationship when asked about it.
- Displays physical affection beyond that which is considered normal.
- Refers frequently, to the other person in conversation, feels free to speak for the other.
- Exhibits an intimacy and familiarity with this friend which causes others to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable in their presence.

*Manipulation methods utilized to prolong the relationship*
• Strong attempts to control finances by combining monies, personal possessions such as property and furniture and moving in together.
• Giving gifts and cards regularly for no special occasion such as flowers, baked good, clothing, jewelry, etc.
• Insisting on wearing or exchanging each other's clothes or copying styles.
• Using poetry or music to provoke an emotional response.
• Body language, frequent hugging and touching, rough housing, back and neck rubs, tickling and wrestling; anything that might lead to prolonged physical contact.
• Using eye contact by staring, giving meaningful or seductive looks or conversely, refusing to make eye contact as a means of punishment.
• Flattery and praise such as “you're the only one who understands me” or I don't know what I'd do without you.”
• Flirting, teasing, using special nicknames and language that excludes by creating secret double conversation that only the two of you understand.
• Creating or exaggerating problems to gain attention and sympathy.
• Making the other feel guilty over unmet expectations: “I was going to call you last night but you are always too busy to bother with me.”
• Pouting, brooding, cold silences in the other's presence.
• Convincing the other that no one else cares about him/her; making friends with the partner's friends in order to control the situation.
• Provoking insecurity by withholding approval, picking on weak points, or threatening to end the relationship.
• Keeping the other's time monopolized so as not to allow for separate activities.

The effects of prolonged, negative soul ties

Years of relationships with people who engage in manipulative tactics to satisfy their insecurities at your expense build up strongholds. The exchange of sexual bonds pass spiritual bonds which become engrained in the soul. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? For two saith he shall be one flesh. 1 Cor 6:16

What Paul is explaining here is transference (what someone deposits into your spirit) and countertransference (what you deposit into their spirit). This accounts for much of the relational dysfunction (commonly known as “baggage”) you carry into subsequent relationships. And this is why you need to keep your body free from sexual immorality until you enter into a covenant marriage relationship. The more you engage in sexual conduct outside of God's plans, the more you allow foreign spirits to attach themselves to you and in the process create a major problems for future relationships.

Some of those dysfunctions include:

Fear of honesty in relationships
Violence
Combative solution seeking methods
Loss of self confidence to sexually satisfy a partner
Accusations
Sexual intimacy problems in marriage
Spiritual lethargy
The Bible tell us how to deal with these strongholds and they must be dealt with on a consistent basis. Let's look at 2 Cor 10:4-6.

**ACTION POINTS!!**

Take action and extract yourself from relationships which are spiritually unhealthy. If you are committing the offenses the same actions need to be taken to break the cycle of dysfunctions.

1. Take immediate steps to end the relationship, including getting counseling about what you have went through. **Stop phone calls, emails, other communication.** It may be necessary to change phone numbers.
2. Sexual activity must stop.
3. Develop a strategy to avoid places the two of you may have frequented together.
4. Be prepared to bring law enforcement into the situation if threats occur.
5. Inform someone you can trust of your decision.
6. During your prayer time, specifically confess and renounce your relationship with the individual(s) and ask God for wisdom and healing.

Get a strategy! Read about developing a strategy on my website [www.witnessfortheworld.org](http://www.witnessfortheworld.org)