



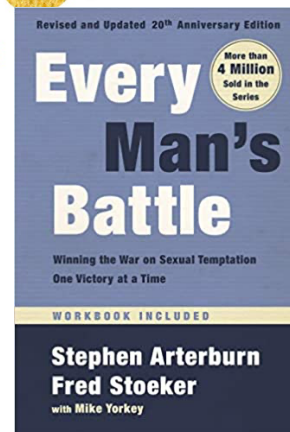
BARE MARRIAGE

HEALTHY, EVIDENCE-BASED, BIBLICAL ADVICE FOR SEX & MARRIAGE

with Sheila Wray Gregoire

Every Man's Battle (2020 Edition)

Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker



SYNOPSIS

"We live in a world awash with sensual images 24/7... men [are] locked in a battle of spiritual warfare against these temptations... Every Man's Battle offers a practical, biblical plan to help you experience victory and wholeness."

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- Every Man's Battle objectifies women and fails to treat them as whole people. The authors either paint women as temptresses who are the enemy of men or as innocents who must be protected at all costs.
- Frames lust as a central part of maleness more than 50 times ("lustful thinking is your brain's guiding worldview" (p. 149); "our maleness is a major root of sexual sin" (p. 71). One chapter is even titled "just by being male."
- Rather than understanding that the objectification of women is at the root of lust, encourages men to use their wives as sin management tools: "you are God's only answer to [his] need" (page xiii); "because of the obvious struggle men have with sexual purity... I began to understand why God would tell me 'your body is not your own'" (page xiv).
- Assumes noticing a woman is attractive will lead to lust, creating hyper-vigilance in the men reading.

EVERY MAN'S BATTLE PORTRAYS WOMEN AS SEX OBJECTS AND DISCOUNTS THEIR EXPERIENCE

- Portrays women as dangerous: "temptation grenades" lobbed by Satan (p. 144), shrews (p. 157), tarantulas (p. 45, referring to a 13-year-old who "blossomed early up top"). Describes women as consumable objects: "vessels of sexual fulfillment" (p. 131), "live attractions" (used 6 times), and "the only thing in the kitchen cabinet" (p. 132).
- Features unnecessary but extremely graphic sexual descriptions of women throughout: "a sensual, serpentine dance scene from the voluptuous Beyonce" (p. 58), "banquets of glistening flesh", "two tiny triangles of tie-dyed fabric struggled to contain her ample bosom" (p. 3), "curvy teenaged babes in too-tight tank tops bounced into the room, giggling up a storm" (p. 107).
- Ignores women's agency and preferences. Men are repeatedly counselled to deceive their wives (p. 132). Women are infantilized, described as "ewe lambs" sixteen times. One author explains how he likes to picture his wife as a baby in need of his protection. Ignores women's sexual pleasure and never instructs men to make sex good for her, except as part of a treatment plan for porn-induced erectile dysfunction.

EVERY MAN'S BATTLE PORTRAYS ALL MEN AS PREDATORS AND NORMALIZES ASSAULT

- Describes abusive and/or criminal behavior as part of "normal" male sexuality, including: indecent exposure, such as masturbating in gym parking lots (pp. 20, 87), voyeurism (p. 21), marital rape and coercion (pp. 23, 175, 188), discriminatory hiring practices (p. 39), sexual assault (p. 63), rape of minors (pp. 76, 151), deceiving wives to get more sex (p. 111), sexual harassment (pp. 152, 155), adultery (pp. 160, 175, 188), clergy abuse (pp. 162, 168), and domestic violence (p. 188). Only the rape of teenagers is noted to be criminal sexual behavior.
- Accuses all readers of sexual predation: "you know you've lurked" (p. 152). "you've forced her to perform like a porn star for you" (p. 23; a description of marital rape); or assumes readers have sexually harassed colleagues (pp. 152, 155). This normalizes predation, gaslights men, and can create unnecessary shame and hypervigilance.
- Fails to label nearly all anecdotes describing assaults as actual assaults, ignoring women's experiences. Instead, when assault is explicitly acknowledged, it is the man being assaulted by a woman appearing in a bikini (p. 123).

- Uses 1 Corinthians 7:4 to justify men assaulting and using their wives sexually (p. 175). Tacitly agrees with the men in their anecdotes who feel entitled to sexual release when they want it even if such sex is coerced (p. 175).

EVERY MAN'S BATTLE SHOWS LITTLE EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING TRUE HEALING FOR SEXUAL SIN

- Rather than addressing the attachment issues or childhood trauma at the heart of much sexual compulsion, paints victory as merely a matter of will-power, which, readers are assured, will take just 6-9 weeks (p. 95).
- Discounts the betrayal trauma common among wives of men with compulsive sexual behavior, instead judging such women harshly for not "having mercy" (p. 112).
- Advocates men "bounce their eyes" from women. However, this still frames women as objects—instead of lusting, you're avoiding. Jesus didn't refuse to look at women; He chose to truly see women. Avoiding women can create lust problems by seeing women as "the other" rather than as full, whole, real people.
- Instead of acknowledging objectification as the root of lust, reinforces objectification by turning wives into sin management tools. Instructs men to quit lust by transferring sexual energy to their wives. Instead of lusting after all women, the solution is to lust after just one, "soliciting the extra five bowls from *her* that I used to get *outside*" (p.133).

HEALTHY SEXUALITY RUBRIC SCORE: 9/48*
 INFIDELITY & LUST: 6/16 | PLEASURE 2/16 | MUTUALITY 1/16
 *FOR FULL RESULTS, VISIT BAREMARRIAGE.COM/GSR-RUBRIC

WHAT READERS HAVE SAID

- In *Every Heart Restored*, a follow-up book to *Every Man's Battle*, a woman who followed the authors' advice reports feeling "like a human toilet for semen." The authors comfort her by noting that "men just don't have that Christian view of sex." (p. 85)
- **Male Facebook commenter:** "I was handed that book when I was in college. Up until that point, I had not really struggled a lot with lust, porn, etc. After reading it, I began to think something was wrong with me. If "every man" was struggling with lust except me, did that make me less of a man? It also planted a lot of doubt on how I interacted with women. The whole bouncing the eyes idea painted every woman as a temptation. It also confused the idea that observation and lust are not synonymous. I started to believe that if I noticed an attractive woman, I was lusting after her. It's taken me years to realize that observation does not equal lust. It's been a long road with a lot of bumps and bruises to undo a lot of the damage."
- **Female Facebook commenter:** "My husband joined a Bible study group for EMB, and quit pretty quickly into it. He said it was causing him to have tempting thoughts he'd never had before even as a hormonal teenager."
- **Female Blog commenter:** "We were at a difficult point in our marriage when *Every Man's Battle* was recommended to us. I remember looking at my husband's face as he skimmed the material. He just looked beaten. Like this is it, this is all the "help" we get and it's literally no help at all. We both felt defeated."

SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS

While sexual faithfulness in a committed relationship is a laudable goal, the methods suggested to achieve this by *Every Man's Battle* (avoiding women, viewing women as the enemy, using wives as sexual methadone) are neither healthy nor laudable. The book refers to women repeatedly as objects, food, or as erotic assemblages of body parts. Criminal sexual behaviors are normalized and best practices to prevent abuse are never described. Anecdotes of sexual coercion are included without that coercion being labelled problematic.



INSTEAD OF EVERY MAN'S BATTLE, CHOOSE...

Unwanted (Jay Stringer), Surfing for God (Michael John Cusick), The Good Guy's Guide to Great Sex (Sheila Gregoire and Dr. Keith Gregoire), The Sexually Healthy Man (Andrew J. Bauman), Nontoxic Masculinity (Zach Wagner)