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Book Review

Line Upon Line, Precept Upon Precept by Rod W. Jeppsen. South Jordan, UT: Pathway Press, 2002. xi+373 pages, index. ISBN 0966189817, paper.

REVIEWED BY:

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Conclusion: regarding *Line Upon Line, Precept Upon Precept* (Jeppsen, 2002), contemporary literature on the treatment of sexual addictions does not have a better illustration of how the “study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than talking about behavior will improve behavior” (Packer, 1997, p. 9).

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

In this work, author Rod W. Jeppsen creatively uses the *Articles of Faith* to organize the book. Each of the twelve chapters is based on one or more of the *Articles*. The *Articles* are reframed as principles that addicted individuals need to learn in order to overcome their problem. For example, the second article: “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression,” Jeppsen

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reframes as “Individual Responsibility for Behavior.”

Having put the gospel principle in a cognitive, emotional, behavioral context, he then presents the manner in which the principle can provide direction for how to do things differently. Numerous anecdotes and quotes from addicted persons color the principles and commentaries; workbook exercises give concrete direction for change.

VALUE TO THE FIELD

Jeppsen’s work is a key contribution to the field of sexual addictions. I believe the book is so fundamentally important it should be on the list of required readings for clients and therapists, and on the recommended reading list for religious leaders¹. There are four key strengths of this work that lead to such an unequivocal recommendation.

First, it represents one of the first and certainly most complete attempts to describe how the doctrines of the gospel inform theory regarding the etiology, maintenance, and cure for the vexing problem of addiction. The book is replete with literally dozens of relevant quotations from the scriptures and the words of modern prophets. This gospel framework illuminates many of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes common to sexual addictions and provides information to help individuals overcome the problem.

Second, the book contains the same stunningly rich descriptions of etiological and maintaining factors as Patrick Carnes’ *Out of the Shadows* (2001a). Professionals will additionally benefit from Jeppsen’s new, gospel-saturated description. Clients will gain new hope as they see and understand addiction in a gospel framework, as told in the words of their peers.

Third, the book contains numerous workbook assignments. Many of these assignments can be adapted as foundations for effective in-session activities and can readily become between-session assignments. They can also combine with and strengthen some of the exercises outlined in Carnes’ *Facing the Shadow* (2001b), by adding a gospel perspective.

Finally, the book contains reports of dozens of client perceptions of this problem that can assist professionals to better understand the problem, particularly those in training to treat sexual addictions. Those struggling with the problem will benefit from learning

about the experiences of others (particularly those who are not yet ready to attend group settings to address their problems).

LIMITATIONS

There are a few practical issues that this book does not address:

Non-LDS issues

I believe that the most effective existing models of treatment are those that start with a doctrinal foundation and then adapt to non-religious audiences, rather than the other way around. With Jeppsen's book (2002) having laid the foundation for an LDS doctrinal basis for understanding sexual addictions, it is hoped that the author will expand the model by writing additional versions for non-LDS Christians and unreligious individuals as well.

Workbook exercises

The workbook exercises are generally well conceived. However, although many of the exercises generate serious thought, some lack sufficient detail to compel one to actually complete them. Some exercises probably serve more as questions to stir the thinking of the individual in productive ways. It would be very helpful to develop a manual to accompany this book that outlines the assignments in more thorough detail. Such a workbook could lead the reader through a series of questions and end with suggestions for specific actions, followed by questions to answer after having completed the new actions. As currently written, the exercises are best suited for individuals with a high motivation to change. A workbook would help motivate those in the earlier stages of change as well.

Overall Framework

The main limitation of this work is that there is no explicitly described framework that tells us how to decide which information is most useful at which points in time. The author should be commended for the exhaustive description of so many important points that need to be heard. However, while the Articles of Faith do provide somewhat of a sequential road map through recovery², the work is so exhaustive

that at times it feels like reading a long list; average readers may lose interest if they are not motivated enough to read the whole book to find the principles they are most in need of.

It would be useful to develop a model that helps particular individuals choose what is most important for them to hear³. I would recommend a survey instrument be developed that would point a reader toward the most expedient principles to understand his/her individual situation. This model could be an important addition to the workbook.

APPROPRIATE AUDIENCES

Service Delivery

This book is strongly recommended to all practitioners who treat or anticipate treating sexual addiction cases. Because most mental health professionals are unfamiliar with specific gospel-based views of sexual addiction, most all mental health professionals (not just beginning therapists) could benefit from reading it. Clinical practitioners will likely find it useful to assign every religious client (at least every LDS client) to read it. It is also strongly recommended that bishops and stake presidents read this book to become familiar with how the doctrines of the gospel pertain to addictions.

Clients or Individuals Struggling With the Problem

Indeed, all LDS individuals with addictive problems should read this book. The book is probably most appropriate for individuals who have already made a fairly firm commitment to change. Although individuals early in recovery may not read it very closely or follow the workbook assignments in detail, they will still benefit significantly from other important aspects of the work (e.g., peer experiences). Clients who are further along in recovery will likely find the book is most useful as an ongoing companion, rather than as a work to be read from cover to cover in a few sittings.

SUMMARY

Jeppsen's ambitious undertaking has resulted in a comprehensive index of gospel doctrines as they pertain to sexual addiction that is both readable and compelling. Professionals, ecclesiastical leaders, and individ-

uals affected by this problem are all strongly encouraged to read it. Future adjunctive efforts such as a workbook would enhance this significant contribution to the field by providing more powerful tools to combat the increasingly prevalent and troubling problem of sexual

addictions. I am personally grateful for this fine example of clinical scholarship, fulfilling Elder Maxwell's 27-year-old charge to LDS behavioral scientists (1976, p. 70) to "become more of a link and bridge between revealed truth and the world of scholarship."

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ENDNOTES

1. See recommended reading lists for addictions at <<http://www.latterdayfamilies.com>> (click on *Pornography*, then on *Helpful Reading*).
2. In fact, the 13 Articles of Faith map fairly well onto the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), another well known sequential recovery program.
3. It should be noted that a well developed and tested model of this kind is not yet available. Thus, this is a comment more on what is needed in this field than a criticism of this particular work.