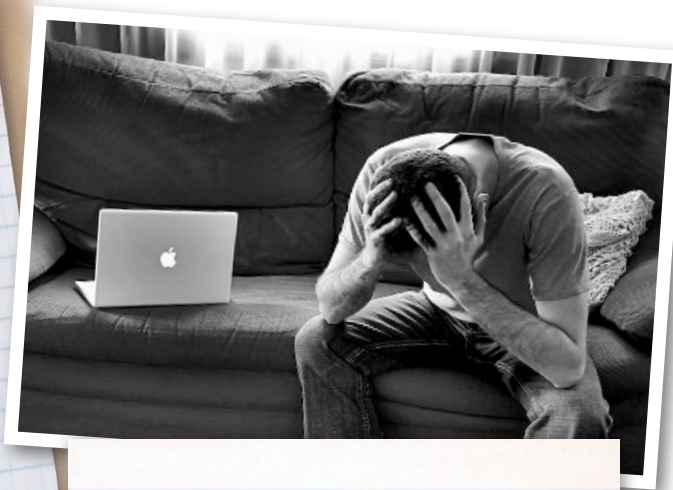


healing
the
sexually
broken
hearted



Book 2



dealing with sexual addictions

The following summarized/edited excerpts have been reprinted with permission from the authors:

New Hope Fellowship Recovery Ministries

Darrell Brazell

<http://newhopelawrence.com/recovery.html>

We strongly recommended that you order the full manual, ***“New Hope For Sexual Integrity”***, from the website above.

Amanda Buys' Spiritual Covering

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¹ Meaning: The ANOINTED one

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Introduction

The movie "The Shawshank Redemption," has is a powerful image that can help you as you begin this journey of recovery. The main character, Andy Dufresne, (falsely convicted of murdering his wife) has spent almost twenty years digging a tunnel through his cell wall into an equipment area. On the night of his escape, he busts a clay sewer pipe that eventually leads him to freedom. Red, a prisoner of over thirty years, in awe of his friend's accomplishment, narrates his escape:

*Andy crawled to freedom through 500 yards of s*** smelling foulness I can't even imagine, or maybe I just don't want to. Five hundred yards ... that's the length of five football fields, just shy of a half a mile.*

The power of the scene grips me every time I watch it. Andy crawls out of the pipe, strips off his sewage-soaked prison clothes and stands in the cleansing rain, arms outstretched, devouring the sweet taste of freedom for the first time in almost twenty years.



The same thing is true for the path of recovery. It begins with a 500-yard crawl through the raw sewage of our lives. Many, upon getting their first whiff, crawl back to the familiarity of their prison cell, unable or unwilling to face the pain of looking back on what they have done and what has been done to them. A few brave souls climb into the sewer line unsure whether or not they can make it to the other end, but determined never to return to the prison cell of their addiction. Every inch is painful - yet they continue the journey because they believe at the end of the pipe, there is cleansing and there is freedom.

Embracing Reality Opens the Door to Hope

If you are working through this manual for yourself, you have at least acknowledged you might have a problem with sexual issues. This is the essential first step. However, acknowledging you might have a problem but not doing anything about it is just as harmful as staying in denial. I have counseled many men through the years who admit they have a problem, say they desperately want help but don't want to do anything differently (i.e. the work of recovery) than they have done in the past. At this point, I haven't seen a single man get healthy by simply doing what he has done before. If you continue to do what you have done in the past, you will continue to have the same results.

There is, however, hope. Tremendous hope! Your life can be different. Jesus Christ can set you free from the bondage of sexual sin. Right now, you stand at a critical point of decision. You are the only one who can decide whether you will commit to recovery, no matter the cost.

- Will you commit or will you be like the men who begin the journey but give up when the trail starts going uphill?
- Will you follow Jesus on the narrow road to the cross or will you continue down the wide path to destruction?

The Cost of Addiction

The reality of sexual bondage is that it is even worse than a physical cancer because cancer can only destroy the body and not the soul. Sexual addiction destroys your relationship with God and rots your soul. No, God doesn't turn His back on anyone. (Think about it: Jesus even accepted Judas' kiss instead of turning away.) However, people trapped in sexual addiction inevitably cauterize their desire and ability to hear from and connect with God. It will also kill your marriage. Your wife may or may not divorce you. She may not even complain that something is wrong, but your marriage will continue to die.

We've had many couples talk about how, prior to recovery, their marriage was only a farce. It was two people going through the motions, pretending they were fine even though they were both dying agonizing deaths of isolation.

If you have, or someday hope to have children, you must also realize sexual bondage prevents you from connecting with them in the ways they desperately need. We have had men argue about this, but we see the deadness in their eyes and know their kids see it as well. Remember, a child invariably interprets a parent's deadness in the light of "*there must be something wrong with me.*" This subjective interpretation by children is part of the reason sexual addiction so often passes down generation after generation.

Obsessing about pornography and sex propels its captives to shame and prevents them from connecting with anyone, let alone a son who desperately needs a father to affirm his budding manhood or a daughter who needs him to delight in her beauty. If you are struggling to believe this, read *Beyond The Bedroom* by Dr. Douglas Weiss. He surveyed adult children of sexual addicts and found incredible damage done in remarkably similar ways. Current research, much like the research on adult children of alcoholics, shows sexual addiction leads to a whole host of problems for children as they grow up with parents who are addicted, co-dependent, disconnected and, therefore, unable to truly connect with their children. You cannot underestimate the damage you will do if you continue to live an addictive life.

Ironically, if you choose to remain in your addiction, even your sex life will suffer and die a painful death. Oh, you may have countless sexual encounters with yourself and even others, but every time you engage in solo sex or non-relational sex (even if it is with your spouse), a part of your heart dies and the cancer spreads. This slow killing of the heart is one of the reasons addicts always need stronger stimuli. When a boy first sees a picture of a nude woman, it sends him into orbit. Twenty or thirty years later, after he has feasted on pornography, sexual promiscuity and other acting out behaviors, he finds himself looking for incredibly perverse and sometimes even illegal material or activities because the regular stuff just doesn't do much for him anymore. Like untreated cancer, a sexual addiction is a certain course of death.

The Cost of Recovery

Facing the reality of recovery from an addiction is also difficult. You will not get out of the noose of sexual addiction easily. Developing an intimate relationship with God must always be your first priority. However, recovery is a crucial part of the process of sanctification and is actually part of making God the number one priority in your life. Sexual fantasy and gratification are two of your primary idols. Recovery from sexual sin is a process of looking beyond these idols to discover your deeper desire for intimacy with God. Therefore, you must make sacrifices. You must make group meetings, counseling appointments, working on materials and phone calls as important to you as doctor visits, chemotherapy and radiation treatments are to a cancer patient.

Recovery will also require you to spend money on materials, counseling, travel expenses, childcare ... BUT, it will be worth every single penny you spend! It never ceases to amaze me how, as addicts, we always found whatever we needed to act out, yet in recovery we allow even the smallest hurdle to stop us. In recovery, we need to apply the same drive we used in our addiction and be willing to do whatever it takes.

You must decide at the very beginning of your recovery that your heart is worth spending the time, energy and money necessary to get healthy. And it is!

In fact, one of the best things you can do at the start (or re-start if that is where you are) of recovery is to take out your calendar and clear it for the first three months: schedule group meetings, counseling appointments, phone calls and a daily time for working on recovery materials before you start adding any other appointments, tasks or activities. If you attempt to squeeze recovery into your already busy schedule, other activities will sabotage your good intentions.

You may object and say, "*But I have a job, responsibilities at church and all my kids' activities!*"

Yes, but if you had cancer would any of these things keep you from doing whatever is necessary for your healing? Besides, what good is a job if you lose your marriage and live your life disconnected from God and others? Do you think your church wants you binging on porn during the week but wearing a robe and singing in the choir on Sunday rather than taking the time you need to break free from your sin? What good is attending your son's baseball games if, whenever you are alone with him, you are an emotional zombie because your shame won't allow you to look him in the eye? Similarly, how does your physical presence benefit your son if you miss his triumphant un-assisted double play because you were locked in a trance on the voluptuous woman sitting on the bleacher in front of you? What good is attending your daughter's ballet recitals if all you ever do is criticize her because you despise yourself and end up projecting that on her?

You may object and say, "*I don't do those things.*" Maybe ... maybe not.

However, if you do not address your sexual addiction, your children will suffer greatly because of your sin. The collateral damage of a sexual addiction is great enough that the price of your temporary absence from other activities pales in comparison. No, you do not want to miss all their activities and no, you don't want to completely disconnect from your church.

However, missing some or even a significant portion of these activities for a season and taking a sabbatical from church responsibilities to pursue recovery is the best thing you can do for yourself as well as for your family, your church and even your employer. Taking a break now may be the key that will enable you to connect later.

The Cost of Accepting Help

In addition to making recovery a top priority, you must also commit to following instructions. This is a difficult thing for all men, but especially addicted men. In his book, *Don't Call It Love*, Patrick Carnes spends two entire chapters talking about the "Master of the Universe" syndrome. He talks about how almost every addict believes he is somehow different and often above everyone else. We have seen this play out in many different but tangible ways.

One way we have seen it most clearly, however, is in following instructions. We have had a number of men come to us and look at what we ask them to do as if it is a menu at their favorite restaurant. They look down the list and, in essence, make comments to themselves like ...

- I like the sound of the book *Pure Desire*, so I think I will order one of those and use it for an appetizer.
- Phone calls? Well, I'm not really much of a phone person. Besides, it could get messy, and I don't want to bother anyone. Moreover, if I start calling people, they might call me at inconvenient times.
- Group meetings? Well, I can see some value in them, but every week, or multiple times each week. ... I don't think so! That must be for the guys who are really screwed up. I'm sure if I come to two or three groups a month I will be just fine.

We have had many men approach recovery this way and, to this date, none of them has made any real progress. "*There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death*" (**Proverbs 14:12**). Thankfully, some have hung around long enough to see other men follow instructions and make huge strides; seeing others change has led to a willingness to "work the program." Amazingly enough, once they start doing what we have asked them to do, they also begin to make progress.

I must admit, however, part of me cringes as I write this because I know it could come across as if I think we have a magical formula and everyone's recovery follows the same path. Nothing could be further from the truth; we continue to learn more every day as God reveals more and more to us. We also know there are other schools of thought. We know our methods and values differ from others who have helped many grow to healthier places. We have learned and even incorporated things from them.

Nevertheless, what we have experienced is that part of the recovery process is for the addict to lay down his pride and humbly submit to those God has placed in front of him on his recovery journey.

Important Reminder

Before we move on to the first set of "Application and Journaling Questions," I want to remind you how incredibly important it is for you to take the time to write out answers to each of these questions. Reading a manual but not answering the questions is like reading about exercise. By reading, you might learn a few things about jogging, but you will still be fat and out of shape unless you get off the couch! So get off the couch, take up your pen and write.

Application & Journaling Questions

1. Have you come to the realization that you have a major problem with sexual issues? If yes, what events, circumstances etc. led to this realization? Are you ready to call it an "addiction"? Why or why not?
2. When have you acknowledged your problem in the past but did nothing about it or failed in your attempts to change? What pitfalls do you see from your previous attempts to change?
3. Applying the cancer analogy to yourself, how much time per week would you commit to treatment if you knew it would save your life and your sexual virility? How much money would you be willing to spend?
4. What do your responses to these screening tests say about your struggle with sexual issues?
5. How do you respond to the following statement: "Your sexual sin is as damaging to your heart, to your relationships and to your soul as cancer is to your physical body"? Do you believe this? If yes, what evidence do you see to that effect? If no, what will it take for you to see the collateral damage?
6. How much time have you spent in sexual struggle? Seriously, take the time to add it up. In a typical week, (or maybe your worst week) how much time have you spent on the following:
 - Looking at pornography.
 - Fantasizing about sexual things.
 - Destroying the evidence? (clearing history files etc.)
 - Acting out through solo sex or with others.
 - Obsessed with the battle trying to not act out but wanting to.
 - Total hours per week _____.
 - Hours per week times 52 weeks per year _____.
 - Hours per year times number of years in the struggle _____.
7. What does the amount of time you have spent struggling with sexual issues say to you about the amount of time you will need to commit to recovery?
8. How much money have you spent?¹ Take the time to make a rough estimate (be careful to not minimize) on each of the following categories and then total it up.

¹ Cost list adapted from Doug Weiss *101 Freedom Exercises #40*

- R___ on materials (magazines, internet, videos, etc.).
- R___ on professional sex services.
- R___ on medical tests and treatment for STD's.
- R___ on legal fees (including divorce).
- R___ on divorce loss.
- R___ on child support.
- R___ on missed opportunities (college, job promotions, business ventures).
- R___ on working in a job beneath your abilities.
- R___ on loss of creativity and energy.
- R___ on guilt spending (to make you or partner feel better).
- R___ on geographical moves (running from your addiction).
- R___ on emotional/financial immaturity due to addiction.
- R___ on losses by trusting untrustworthy people (scams/ investment).
- R___ on _____.
- R___ on _____.
- R___ on _____.

TOTAL = R _____.

9. What does the amount of money you have spent say to you about the amount of money you will need to commit to recovery? What does it say about how much you will save once you are free?
10. If you are married, which statement below do you think is the real status of your marriage?

- Happily living the dream we envisioned.
- Struggling some but a good marriage for the most part.
- Struggling and fighting almost constantly.
- Estranged roommates living in the same house, sleeping in the same bed, co-managing children and life responsibilities.
- Adversaries who hold the pretense of marriage but in reality constantly combat, undermine and oppose one another.
- On the way to divorce court.
- Other: Please Explain.

11. How would your wife describe your marriage? (If you have the courage, ask her.) _____.
12. If you have children, how well do you really connect with them? Do they experience the joy of knowing that you delight in them, or do they mostly experience your criticism, anger and frustration?
13. Do you see the necessity of clearing your calendar for the next 100 days to focus on recovery? Are you willing to commit to that? Who will you tell about your commitment?
14. What is your general disposition towards instructions?
- Instructions are for the weak minded; I can figure things out on my own.
 - Instructions are only for when I'm desperate. (I'll try to do things on my own and if it doesn't work, then I'll read the instructions).
 - Instructions are my friend! I read and follow as best as I can.
15. What reservations do you have about following the "instructions" laid out in this manual, by your sponsors and by your leaders?
16. What is your conviction towards following instructions in recovery? In other words, not what do you usually do, but what do you believe God is calling you to do as you begin this journey?
17. How does the escape scene from "The Shawshank Redemption" strike you? What parallels can you see from your own story? What "sewage" are you most afraid to face? How much do you long for the cleansing rain? (Note: watching Shawshank could be a very valuable thing for you to do as it makes many powerful points for life and for recovery. It is rated "R" primarily for prison rape scenes. If that might be a trigger for you, then ignore this suggestion.)

Sexual Addiction Screening Test

Were you sexually abused as a child or adolescent?	Yes	No
Do you regularly purchase romance novels or sexually explicit magazines?	Yes	No
Have you stayed in romantic relationships after they become emotionally or physically abusive?	Yes	No
Do you often find yourself preoccupied with sexual thoughts or romantic daydreams?	Yes	No
Do you feel your sexual behavior is abnormal?	Yes	No
Does your spouse (or significant other(s)) ever worry or complain about your sexual behavior?	Yes	No
Do you have trouble stopping your sexual behavior when you know it is inappropriate?	Yes	No
Do you ever feel bad about your sexual behavior?	Yes	No
Has your sexual behavior ever created problems for you and your family?	Yes	No
Have you ever sought help for sexual behavior you did not like?	Yes	No
Have you ever worried about people finding out about your sexual activities?	Yes	No
Has anyone been hurt emotionally because of your sexual behavior?	Yes	No
Have you ever participated in sexual activity in exchange for money or gifts?	Yes	No
Do you have times when you act out sexually followed by periods of celibacy (no sex at all)?	Yes	No
Have you made efforts to quit a type of sexual activity and failed?	Yes	No
Do you hide some of your sexual behavior from others?	Yes	No

Do you find yourself having multiple romantic relationships at the same time?	Yes	No
Have you ever felt degraded by your sexual behavior?	Yes	No
Has sex or romantic fantasies been a way for you to escape your problems?	Yes	No
When you have sex, do you feel depressed afterwards?	Yes	No
Do you regularly engage in sado-masochistic behavior?	Yes	No
Has your sexual activity interfered with your family life?	Yes	No
Have you been sexual with minors?	Yes	No
Do you feel controlled by your sexual desire or fantasies of romance?	Yes	No
Do you ever think your sexual desire is stronger than you are?	Yes	No
TOTAL:	_____	_____

Most sex addicts tended to get higher scores. In fact 96.5% scored thirteen or more. So if your score was above thirteen your answers parallel other addicts. There are some who do score in the 10-13 range. This may mean you have done some things you regret or it may mean you are in early stage addiction.

Internet Sexual Addiction Screening Test

I have some sexual sites bookmarked.	TRUE	FALSE
I spend 5+ hours per week using my computer for sexual pursuits.	TRUE	FALSE
I have joined sexual sites to gain access to online sexual material.	TRUE	FALSE
I have purchased sexual products online.	TRUE	FALSE
I have searched for sexual material through an Internet search tool.	TRUE	FALSE
I have spent more money for online sexual material than I planned.	TRUE	FALSE
Internet sex has sometimes interfered with certain aspects of my life.	TRUE	FALSE
I have participated in sexually related chats.	TRUE	FALSE
I have a sexualized username or nickname that I use on the Internet.	TRUE	FALSE
I have masturbated while on the Internet.	TRUE	FALSE
I have accessed sexual sites from other computers besides my home.	TRUE	FALSE
No one knows I use my computer for sexual purposes.	TRUE	FALSE

I have tried to hide what is on my computer or monitor from others.	TRUE	FALSE
I have stayed up after midnight to access sexual material online.	TRUE	FALSE
I use the Internet to experiment with different aspects of sexuality (e.g., bondage, homosexuality, anal sex, etc.)	TRUE	FALSE
I have my own website which contains some sexual material.	TRUE	FALSE
I have promised myself to stop using the Internet for sexual purposes.	TRUE	FALSE
I sometimes use cybersex as a reward for accomplishing something (e.g., Finish a project, stressful day, etc.)	TRUE	FALSE
When unable to access sexual material on line, I feel anxious, angry, or disappointed.	TRUE	FALSE
I have increased the risks I take online (given out name, phone number, met people offline, etc.)	TRUE	FALSE
I have punished myself when I use the Internet for sexual purposes (e.g., time-out from computer, cancel Internet subscription, etc.)	TRUE	FALSE
I have met face to face with someone I met online for romantic purposes.	TRUE	FALSE
I use sexual humor and innuendo with others while online.	TRUE	FALSE
I have run across illegal sexual material while on the Internet.	TRUE	FALSE
I believe I am an Internet sex addict.	TRUE	FALSE

TOTAL:	_____	_____
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Experts in sexual addiction say 19 or more "True" answers are definite signs of sexual addiction; 9-18 indicates "problematic behavior." It is important to note however, these tests merely look at the problem from a "compulsivity" standpoint (i.e. has it progressed to the point of being classified as an "addiction" by clinical standards?). Jesus has a much higher standard:

You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lust (fully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27-28).

If you answer "True" to even a few of these questions, odds are this is a struggle you need help to overcome. You cannot escape sexual addiction by yourself; any attempt to handle it on your own will merely compound the shame that actually drives the addiction.

Important:

It is important to note many men score themselves much higher on these tests after they have been in recovery for a while. No, they didn't regress and have new things to own. They just thawed out enough to recognize questions they should have answered differently when they initially took the test. **Therefore, please don't naively believe that a "low score" on these tests means this material doesn't apply to you.**

On the road to recovery,
the "five dailies"

#1 Pray

As obvious as prayer may be, many often overlook it. Trying to walk out of a sexual addiction without prayer is like trying to run a power tool without a power source.

However, many men have felt alienated from God for so long that prayer seems artificial if not impossible. Don't believe Satan's lies. God is always "glad as glad can be" to be with you.



(Remember, your sin is no longer a problem for God; on the cross, Jesus paid the price for every sin.) Find a reminder that works for you and make your morning prayer an essential part of your day. Again, it doesn't have to be complicated but can be as simple as the following:

Dear God, thank You for this day. Please give me the strength today to live according to Your ways in all things but especially in the sexual arena. I know it will be a battle, and I know I cannot do it on my own. Please give me the strength to fight and to not return to my old ways of acting out. Please give me the tools and weapons I need as well as the courage to use them. Remind me You are by my side and You are more powerful than my enemy.

Beginning your day in prayer acknowledges your complete dependence upon God, sets a tone for recovery and starts your feet moving in the right direction.

#2 Make Phone Calls

Phone calls are lifelines to men drowning in the sea of sexual addiction. In *Don't Call It Love*, Dr. Patrick Carnes surveyed over 1500 individuals who had been in recovery for three or more years and one of the things they listed as common elements of those who had progressed was "learning to use the telephone"... Everyone seems intellectually to get the idea of making a phone call at "crisis times."

However, understanding the concept and actually making calls are two very different things. In addition, we have seen that men who wait until they are in "crisis" never make the call for two primary reasons:

- First, they can't because by the time they realize they are in crisis, they are already too far into the ritual to stop as their drug of choice has hijacked their attachment center.
- Second, they can't call because they haven't made the relational connections that would empower them to reach out to someone.

Therefore, we encourage men to make a phone call every single day. Yes, we know it seems awkward at first. Yes, we know you do not really even know what to say. *"You told me I needed to make phone calls, so I'm calling you. I don't have any idea what to talk about so you'll have to coach me through it."* It should not surprise you this man is one who joined our groups and never had another major crash. If you want to get healthy, make a phone call every single day.

#3 Read and Reflect

A third essential part of your recovery is taking the time to read and reflect on recovery materials. Spending time every day reading something will help focus your mind on recovery and give you insights into your real struggles. Many find doing this early in their day helps set a tone for recovery. Some discover they are able to concentrate better in the evening while others use their lunch break.

It is also helpful to set realistic goals for time spent reading and reflecting. If you say you are going to read for an hour every morning and journal for an hour every night, odds are you will fail to meet your goal and Satan will use that failure against you. However, if you do not set any goals, then you probably won't read or journal very much.

One practice I encourage is to commit 10 minutes every morning to read, 10 minutes every night to journal and at least an hour block once or twice a week to dive into materials. The short times help you stay focused on a daily basis and the extended times help you work through significant portions of material in order to understand your struggle, your identity, and most importantly, God's Heart towards you.

Find whatever works for you and carve that time out of your schedule. Again, if you wait until you have spare time, Satan will make certain you never have a moment to breathe, let alone time to read or reflect. You must make recovery work a priority or it will not happen on a consistent basis.

A second critical aspect of reading recovery material is that you desperately need to put new perspectives in your mind and heart. A man who truly wants to change will seek out materials written by people who have been changed. There is much you can learn from those who have traveled the road of recovery ahead of you.

Reading the personal stories of men like yourself - seeing both the glory and the depravity in their lives - will help you see both in your own life. You can learn from their failures and their victories and be both encouraged and challenged along the way. Men progressing in recovery will begin to build a library of materials that have been helpful.

Often, men do okay with reading, but they don't take the time to reflect and journal about what they read. The problem with this approach is reading without reflecting makes it incredibly easy to keep recovery principles on an intellectual plane rather than allowing them to penetrate to your heart.

Writing, whether it is in the form of journaling or even just answering questions like are in this manual, opens unique pathways in the mind and heart that often lead to tremendous breakthroughs.

The Right and Left Side of the Brain

It may be helpful at this point to understand a little about the right/left division of our brain. The left side of our brain is the file cabinet that holds everything we know through verbal logic. The right side of our brain is experiential. A simple analogy to use is the idea of a dog.

The left-side of our brain has a file that contains everything we know intellectually about dogs. It knows names of different breeds of dogs, what they eat, what they do etc.

The right side of our brain contains the information we know by experience. The right side of your brain remembers the soft silky feel of petting your neighbor's dog, the joy of playing with a litter of beagle puppies and the warmth of snuggling next to your collie on the floor.

It especially remembers any **fearful or painful encounters**. For example, if a pit bull attacked when you were five, then even the sound of distant barking brings right brain feelings and memories to surface. What is important about this distinction is left-brain "knowledge" is completely inaccessible to us when the right side of your brain malfunctions.

The brain is a five stage hierarchal system and the left side is level five. Therefore, if something goes wrong in levels one through four, (which all reside in the right side of our brain) we lose our ability to access information in the file cabinet. That explains why a pastor or other dedicated Christian who knows countless scriptural reasons not to act out sexually seems to forget everything he knows when he is under stress, afraid or dealing with attachment pain.

Reflection through journaling is one of the most effective ways to engage the right side of your brain. Thinking about your thinking, especially through the discipline of journaling opens unique pathways.

Reading only puts information in the left side of your brain. However, taking the time to write out answers to reflection questions, journaling and practicing other forms of attunement, builds pathways that begin to make information available when you most need it.

Force yourself to write. Don't worry about spelling, grammar or punctuation. Don't even worry if what you write makes sense to anyone other than you. Just write. Try different methods. Some find using a pen and paper allows their thoughts to flow more naturally. Others do much better at a computer. Do whatever works best for you, just find a way to both read and reflect. Then, trust that God will use the process to move you forward on your journey.

#4 Attend Group Meetings

Missing group meetings and progressing in your recovery are inherently contradictory. You cannot walk out of your addiction alone. You tried isolation for years with little to no success. Therefore, you must concede that you desperately need connection with others who understand your struggle. Phone calls are great, but face-to-face interactions are even better. In fact, face-to-face connections can provide the "joy strength" you need literally to grow the control center of your brain. This control center is the part of your brain that has veto power over your impulses.

Group meetings provide opportunities for the honest face-to-face connections that are crucial to the recovery process. They are also opportunities for you to see others on the path with you. You desperately need others in front, behind and beside you on the way.

So what does that mean on a practical level? It means if you want to get healthy, at the very least, you need to attend one group every week. In early recovery, it would be great to attend a meeting every day. Unfortunately, that is not possible in most places. However, if you want to get healthy, you must make group meetings a priority. You can also create "mini-groups." For example, partner with someone and meet once a week outside of group for lunch, breakfast or whenever you can to share the struggles of life and pray for and with each other. These connections will not replace your meetings, but they can go a long ways in supplementing the meetings and building the joy strength you need to overcome your addiction.

#5 Pray Again

Finally, the last of the five dailies is to end your day in prayer. Before you go to sleep at night, take a few moments to pray. It is a reminder you cannot travel this road without Divine assistance. If you made it through the day without acting out, then it is an opportunity to thank God for giving you the strength to be sober for that day. If you had a slip or a crash, it is an opportunity to confess your sin and experience God's forgiveness. Either way, taking the time to talk with God at the end of your day is a crucial part of your recovery.

Mistakes and Failures Are to Be Expected

The reality of the road to recovery is that it is generally fraught with many failures along the way. No, this does not mean that everyone in recovery gets a free pass to act out occasionally. However, it does mean that making mistakes and even acting out do not mean you have failed and are doomed to live the rest of your life in your addiction. This is often a revelation to those in recovery as they have generally lived under the oppression of the lie that all failure is catastrophic. We learned as small children that whenever others, (i.e. our parents and other adults in our world), discovered our failures, severe consequences and shame quickly followed. Ironically, God's design is just the opposite. His plan is for our parents to help us learn that failure is a crucial part of life. Jim Wilder describes this process in *Living With Men*:

Making Mistakes. *Around Dad things are always going wrong. The boy learns that Dad smiles when he tries and misses. Together they laugh at mistakes. Together they test the limits to see what is possible today. Together the boy learns to stretch his limits but also how to set limits as well. He can clearly see the difference in power between himself and his dad. He can't do everything Dad can – not yet.*

Because his father cares, a boy can see that his efforts mean something, even when they fail. It will come as no surprise to the reader that men are failure prone in most of their efforts. For a baby boy to grow up into a man, he must also get good at failure. One of the essential ingredients of a good childhood is the opportunity to fail without being penalized. Freedom to fail is a big part of preventing sexual addictions. When a boy grows up with freedom to fail he will allow real relationships to nurture his soul instead of living in fantasy or self-generated sexuality.

Often it is important to point out the **difference between recovery and sobriety**. Many times, men are on the road to recovery but continue to stumble with their sobriety. However, it is essential we recognize that some individuals require a significant amount of recovery and healing before finding sobriety. Be encouraged: God is at work, even when we fall.

Consistency is the Key

Commit to doing the five dailies for the first 90 days of your recovery and see what a difference they make in your life. You may find that you will do great for a week or ten days and then start missing phone calls and then not read and before you know it, you have two or three days without doing anything and the next thing you know, you return to old acting out behaviors. The five dailies will not magically prevent you from acting out or heal you. However, like taking medical treatment, they put you in a place to receive the healing you desperately need.

Application & Journaling Questions

1. Describe a time in your life where you have cried out to God asking Him to take away the burden of your sexual struggles. What was/is good about that cry? What was/is inherently missing? the "Five Dailies," which ones seem the most difficult for you? Why?
2. How do you feel about approaching God every morning? Does that sound like an easy thing to do, Do you think, "I get to have a conversation with my Loving Father" or does it sound difficult, i.e. "How can I talk to Him after all I have done or the many ways I think He has let me down?"
3. What is your conviction about why you need the "Morning Prayer" time?
4. At what stage of your morning routine do you need to commit to keeping your Morning Prayer time?
5. List any legitimate reasons for not praying in the morning
6. List your most likely "lame excuses" for not praying in the morning.
7. How many "check in" phone calls are you currently making each week? How many do you believe you need to make?
8. When is the best time during most weekdays for you to make a check in call? Weekends?
9. List any legitimate reasons you have for not making a phone call on any given day.
10. List your most likely "lame excuses" for not making a phone call on any given day.
11. Where do you keep the phone numbers of the men in your group? If they aren't programmed into your cell phone, why aren't they?
12. Have you experienced a time where you called someone when you were struggling and felt stronger after the call? If yes, what do you remember about your decision to make the call, the conversation and its impact?
13. List two people ahead of you in recovery you feel most comfortable calling, two people at a similar place and two people behind you.
14. How do you think your week would be different if you talked to all six of these individuals once a week?
15. Have you made any phone calls where you felt dismissed, rejected or tolerated? (Or maybe multiple phone calls and only got voice mail.) What lies did Satan throw at you in the wake of those calls?
16. Who are the "night owls" in your group? Who would you feel the least uncomfortable calling at midnight? Who are the "early birds?" Who would you feel the least uncomfortable calling at 6 am?
17. Do you need to make any changes to your cell phone plan? What changes will you commit to make?

18. Which is harder for you: allowing a call from a group member to go to your voice mail because it isn't a good time for you or answering a call when you just don't feel like having a "recovery conversation?" Why?
19. When is the best time during a normal weekday for you to read recovery material? When is the best time to reflect by writing? How about on the weekends?
20. Many men have found it helpful to commit to not doing something they enjoy if they haven't been in their recovery materials for the day/week. Examples include: "I won't watch any TV if I haven't done my recovery work for the day." Or, "I won't play golf on Saturday unless I had a good week in my materials." Is there anything you are ready to commit to along these lines? Who are you going to tell about that commitment?
21. List any legitimate reasons you have for not reading and reflecting on any given day.
22. List your most likely "lame excuses" for not reading and reflecting on any given day.
23. Why is it a good idea for you to go to a group meeting when you do not feel like going?
24. How difficult is it (or would it be) for you to go to group after a slip or a crash? Why? What truths do you need to remind yourself of if and when you are in that situation?
25. How well has your "old way" worked for you in the battle for your sexuality?

Phone Call Tips & Procedures

Making Calls

1. **Keep group phone numbers with you at all times.**

2. Always ask if the person answering has time and is in a place where they can talk. If you know you have a difficult issue you need to wrestle with, be up front from the beginning and let the person know it may take a while. If all you need to do is "check in" then communicate that so they will know it will be a relatively short phone call.



3. **The most important thing is to break out of your isolation.** Sometimes the person on the other end of the call may have some very important or insightful things to tell you; sometimes he may say little or nothing of significance. Regardless of his response, God will use your openness as a pathway to healing. We often discover things about ourselves as we attempt to describe our struggles to someone else. Many times, what gives us clarity is simply breaking out of isolation and talking outside our own head. We also experience a taste of community simply by knowing someone cares enough to listen.

4. **Call whenever the thought hits you.** If you think you should make a call, do not talk yourself out of it. Example: Every time I chose not to make a call, I ended up in a fight with my wife or in a bad place later that day. Finally, I made a commitment to God that whenever I had the passing thought to call someone I would. I was honestly shocked at what a huge difference it made.

5. Do not ignore the Spirit's promptings. He knows more than you do about where you really are.

6. **Realize you will get different reactions,** responses and results with every person you call.

We encourage men to call three different types of people.

- Calling someone who is ahead of you in recovery will often help you see a glimpse of path. It also has the greatest potential for giving you the insights you need right now.

- Calling someone who is in a similar place as you are gives you someone with whom you can commiserate and with whom you know understands your pain.
- Calling someone behind you often gives you a glimpse of where you have come from and a greater appreciation of what God is doing in your life.

Realize also that you will "connect" with some men better than you will others. As you make phone calls and share in group times, you will find men who have similar backgrounds and issues as your own with whom you feel safe and from whom you find great support.

You will also find men who are unable to connect over the phone (some are unable to connect in any context, but especially over the phone). Do not take it personally - just call someone else.

You may catch them at a bad time or on a bad day or it just may be their nature. It may even be they aren't really in recovery, but just going through the motions to appease their spouse or others. Regardless, don't let Satan convince you their response is justification for you to give up making phone calls.

7. **Leave discrete messages** unless you are 100% certain someone's voice mail is "secure." For example: "This is Bob from the men's group. I'm really struggling today. Please give me a call"
8. **Don't take unanswered calls personally.** You need to set healthy boundaries around your phones. If you call at a time when they can talk, they will answer. If it is not a good time, they will let it go to voice mail. If you leave a message, most will return your call when they can. If you do not leave a message, they will trust you were making a daily call and found someone else with whom you could "check in." If your call is a crisis call, do not hesitate to leave messages with a number of people. Someone will eventually call back and the act of leaving messages may help you break out of your isolation.
9. **Make phone call appointments.** One of the most common excuses for not making calls is, "I don't want to bother anyone." Much of this fear can be alleviated by asking in group meetings who would be willing to make a phone appointment at a good time for you. For example, simply saying, "I'd like to schedule a phone call at 7: 15 AM on Mondays and Thursdays. Is that a good time for anyone?" is likely to get you several options. In fact, it might connect you with someone else who is struggling to make phone calls, and be a mutually beneficial relationship. Men also find appointments beneficial because they end up having consistent conversations with the same individuals, which builds relationship and aids in accountability.

10. **Learn other's schedules:** Find out who are the "night owls" and "early birds" in your group. For many men, late at night and early in the morning are the most difficult times. They will often tell me, I knew I needed to talk to someone, but I did not want to wake anyone. Sometimes, you just have to run the risk.
11. **Get a cell phone plan with plenty of minutes.** You can use your home phone and you might be able to use your work phone. (Make sure it is legit!)

Receiving Calls

1. **Assess the situation quickly.** Remember, the person calling may simply want to check in or they may be calling at a crisis point. Understanding the difference early in the call will help you respond appropriately so don't be afraid to ask the nature of their call.
2. **Be honest about your availability to talk.** If you only have ten minutes, say so up front. If it is not a good time, ask them if you can call them back. Sometimes you may be in a place where you can listen, but not really give much feedback. They simply need to break out of their isolation by sharing what is going on inside of them.
3. **Learn to use caller ID.** You do not have to answer every call you receive. If you are not in a good place to talk, let your voice mail take the call. If the person needs to talk, it is his responsibility to leave a message and/or call someone else.
4. **Return calls at your first opportunity.** When someone leaves you a message, understand how difficult that may be for him and call him back as soon as you can. Remember, you and the men in your recovery group are in a battle against a horrific enemy and you desperately need to remain connected with them. They need you and you need them.
5. **Use distinctive ring tones.** If your phone has the capability enter a special ring tone for guys in your group so you know even without looking at your phone if the call is coming from one of your brothers in the battle. (It's also helpful to give your wife her own ringtone).
6. **Turn off the phone at the appropriate times.** You do not have to live in bondage to your cell phones, and it is inconsiderate to answer them during group meetings, church services etc. You do not have to be available at every moment.

Weekly meetings

1. **Current struggles:** where are you really at today? What emotions, frustrations and difficult situations are you currently facing? For Example: "My wife and I have been in a huge fight and I'm really angry" or "Work has been incredibly stressful this week and my boss has been all over me" or "I've had the best day of my life."

2. What recovery work have you done in the past week? How did you do on the "Five Dailies" this week? For example: "I am working through a book on sexual bondages, made a phone call every day and this is my second group meeting this week."
3. **Any sin that needs to be confessed**, both sexual sins and non-sexual sins as all sin has a way of "entangling" and leading us into isolation from God and from others. You must address sexual slips or crashes from the previous week directly. While it seems safer just to say, "I crashed on Tuesday night," we believe in specific confessions: ("I surfed porn online for three hours and masturbated four times" or "I woke up from a sexually explicit dream, continued the fantasy and masturbated") opens our hearts to experience real fellowship and the healing God offers.

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1 :7-9).

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5: 16).

4. How did you do with last week's goals and what are your recovery goals for the coming week? For example: "I hope to complete the book on sexual bondages, make a phone call every day and go to group on Thursday and again on Sunday".

Weekly Check In:

- Share where you are now.
- Confess any slips or crashes you had during the previous week.
- Share any "close calls," and places where you feel the "pull" to return to addictive behavior.
- Share what you have read, worked through etc. during the previous week.
- Share any goals you have for the coming week.
- Share how you did with your goals from the previous week.
- Share any pitfalls you see in front of you. I.e. "My wife is going out of town for the weekend and I will be home alone from Friday until Monday."

- Share any prayer needs you might have.
- Ask your counsellor what you can pray about for him / her. (Remember, counsellors have needs also and praying for him helps you by getting you out of your isolation.)

In recovery, you will want to read everything you can to understand your addiction and to understand what you must do to stay clean and to continue to heal and grow into the man God intended when He created you.

One road ... TWO ditches

1. THE DITCH OF DENIAL

We slide into the denial ditch anytime we refuse to see clearly the horrific nature of our sin or the catastrophic effects it has on ourselves and those around us. The damage is plain to see, but we find a myriad of ways to close our eyes and ignore the evidence. The first portion of this chapter addresses several ways we live in denial of our sin.



Outright Denial

There are times we act out the principle: *"Don't confuse me with the facts; I've already made up my mind."*

Sometimes, even when the most blatant and obvious effects of our sin stare us in the face; we choose to simply deny they are there and hope everyone else will join us in our denial.

At some point, almost every man I've counseled with has admitted to flat out lying to his wife about his behaviors. *"No, I wasn't looking at porn. I was up half the night reading sports stories or working on our finances."* The amazing thing is sometimes we become so adept at lying to others we actually begin to believe (on some levels) our own lies. It has been well said the first person an addict deceives is himself.

Comparison Denial

"I know my heart wasn't exactly right, but it isn't as bad as ..." We look at others around us and instead of going to brokenness over our sin or the hardness of our heart; we justify it by looking at the seemingly worse sins of others. Men who only look at "soft-core pornography" or "swimsuits" justify themselves by saying or thinking, *"At least I'm not looking at the hard stuff like most men."* Others, who spend countless hours looking at pornography, compare themselves to men who have affairs or hire prostitutes and say, *"At least I've never really cheated on my wife."* Often, to build up their case, they list all the good things they do like taking their kids to the park, going to recitals, school plays etc. and say, *"I'm doing so much more than my father did"* and use the comparisons as justifications for not looking deeper to the core issues of the heart.

Minimization Denial

One of the most common forms of denial is to admit only a small portion of the problem. Almost every man I've worked with, including myself, started off by only admitting to the "tip of the iceberg." I can't tell you how many men have confessed they had a problem with looking at porn "occasionally" and yet when pressed, or sometimes later as they progressed in their recovery (or faced an imminent polygraph) admitted to looking at porn for several hours a day, multiple days per week. Others admit to looking at porn, but minimize the fact they have progressed to the point of chat rooms, phone sex, strip clubs and other acting out behaviors where they have actual contact (via phone, chat, email or even in person) with "real women."

However, when we minimize our confessions, not only do we not break the shame, we actually add to it. **Satan knows if he can get a man to confess, but hide the extent of his sin he will still have a huge club with which he can beat the man at will.** He whispers lies like: *"Sure, they offered you God's forgiveness, but do you think they would have if they knew how bad it really was. What if they knew you were still lying to them even while confessing?"* You must, therefore, break through denial with truth. Yes, it is often ugly and embarrassing. Yes, it is painful. However, only the truth that can set you free.

Justification Denial

This is where we say things like: *"I know my heart wasn't right, but under the circumstances ... "* *"If you would have been in my shoes, you would have done the exact same thing."* Or, *"If you would have been hurt the way the way I have been hurt, you would have medicated also."*

Our flesh reasons: *"Whatever wrong I do I can pay for it by doing something good."*

"I know this business deal is a little bit on the shady side, but it's too good to pass up and I'll make a ton. I know what I can do; I can give twenty percent instead of just a tithe. That will make up for something won't it?"

You are so deep in denial of justification, that it all makes perfect sense to you. You are the king, and as the king, you expect everyone to accept your justifications. You are the "master of the universe."

The painful question: How often does my sin "make sense?" How often is my heart in an ugly place, but I simply accept it. *"After all, anyone in my position would likely do the same thing. Anyone hurting as much as I am hurting would surely reach for something to numb the pain!"*

Many times a man has sat in my office and "justified" looking at pornography by blaming his wife. *"She always rejects me." "She's never in the mood." "A man has needs you know."*

Single men have often justified their lusts by blaming God. *"If He would just provide a wife, then I wouldn't have to do this anymore."* We justify the hardness of our heart by blaming our circumstances instead of going to brokenness and honestly facing how wretched and ugly is a heart that stubbornly refuses to turn to the God who passionately wants to meet us in these painful places.

Denial of Momentary Reality

Another form of denial we often overlook is when we take a momentary slice of time and say or act as if that moment is the reality of life as a whole. I have encountered so many other men I've learned whenever a man says he has struggled in the past, I always ask him to quantitatively define what he means by the past. I cannot tell you how many men have admitted they have only been clean for a month, a week, or one man in particular who admitted he hadn't looked at any porn since last night so he thought he was good today.

Men in recovery often also wrestle with what does it mean to be honest about the struggle of their past when they are in much healthier places.

Yes, it is a terrifying thing to admit your struggles in situations like this. However, you cannot choose to remain in hiding and walk in the light at the same time. You must be willing to break through the part of your denial that wants to apply the reality of the moment to your entire life. To speak and act as if you would "never do such a thing" is a form of pretense that drives your need to hide, and that need to hide will eventually draw you back into the dark places of your past.

The Danger of Denial

The Danger of Denial (in all its forms) is that it prevents us from seeing how desperately we need a Savior. How often are you confronted with your sin and instead of going to brokenness and confession, you start looking for excuses and justifications? We look for any distraction that keeps us (and others) from looking at the totality of our mess.

2. THE DITCH OF DESPAIR

On the other side of denial is an equally dangerous ditch, the ditch of Despair. Satan doesn't care which ditch you are in, just as long as you aren't on the road. Many times Satan sends you to despair when something finally breaks through your denial. When someone starts saying things like, *"What a wretched man I am"* they sometimes sound like they are on the brink of repentance. In fact, they may be, if they can finish the sentence the same way Paul did in **Romans 7:24-25**: *"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God - Through Jesus Christ our Lord!"*

The Difference Between Guilt and Shame

Unfortunately, many times when we say, "What a wretch I am" it is not about desperation, but about despair. It is not about honestly facing our guilt; it is about swallowing our shame. We must always keep in mind the difference between guilt and shame. Guilt says I have sin I need to deal with, i.e., "I acted like a jerk last night to my wife." Shame says, "I am a jerk and my actions last night prove it." I know these messages sound very similar, but they are as different as night and day. Guilt is about what I have done; shame is about who I am. Guilt always has a solution: confession and the cross of Christ. Shame is a lie Satan speaks to me. It is a lie he speaks about my identity. Guilt has a solution. The Blood of Jesus washes away any and every sin brought to the cross. I can go to God, and I can go to my wife and confess my sin. Even if my wife is unable to forgive me, God has promised His forgiveness. Satan, however, knows if he can get me focused on my shame, if he can get me to agree with him, "I'm such a jerk," he can get me to act like the jerk I believe I am. After all, I must live up to my reputation. It is, therefore, crucial to realize shame and despair are ultimately acts where we refuse to take God at His Word. Shame and despair are not problems of self-image; they are a lack of faith in God doing what He said He would do. Shame is refusing to believe what God has said about my identity in Christ.

Our Identity in Christ

Think about it this way, what does scripture say about our identity? What does scripture say about who I am in Christ?

- *"I am a new creation" (II Cor. 5: 17)*
- *"I am a temple for the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. 6: 19)*
- *"I am redeemed from the curse of the law" (I Peter 1: 18)*
- *"I am a saint" (Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1: 1)*
- *"I am holy and without blame before Him in love." (Eph. 1:4)*
- *"I am victorious" (Rev. 21:7)*
- *"I am complete in him" (Col. 2:10)*
- *"I am free from condemnation" (Rom. 8: 1)*

When you begin to take God at His Word, when you begin to believe you are who He proclaims instead of who Satan whispers you are, you begin to live in strength and victory. When you are in the ditch of despair, the last thing Satan wants you to do is to allow Scripture to tell you your identity. He knows if you ever start getting a clear picture of your true identity, you won't live in the gutter anymore.

We must realize in Christ, I am no longer defined by my sin, I am defined by my Savior. My identity isn't what I have done. My identity is not my fallen broken nature. My identity is Christ. I am who He says I am. That is what it means to be Christian. That is why I am so hesitant to call men I work with "sex addicts." That isn't their identity. You are not a sex addict. You are a child of the king who struggles with sexual addiction. You are not your sin. You are a redeemed son of the King. Does this minimize the struggle? No! It claims the redeeming power of the Blood of Jesus Christ and puts Jesus back in His proper place as Lord over all our struggles, no matter how deeply rooted they may be.

The denial ditch says, *"It's not really that bad."* The despair ditch says, *"It is so bad that nothing, not even Jesus can handle the problem."* The truth, however, says, **"Yes, it is that bad - in fact, it is even worse than I realize. The good news, however, is Jesus' sacrifice is an overpayment no matter how bad my sin might be."** Living in despair by accepting shame is a denial of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. It is saying to God *"The cross is not enough. My sin, my shame is too much to forgive, too much to change."* Paul says in **Romans 8: 1** *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* Therefore, to accept shame is to refuse to take God at His Word. Shame, believing a lie about your identity, is an insult to God and invariably leads to greater sin and the downward spiral of despair.

The Danger of Despair

While the danger of denial is to believe I don't need a savior, the danger of despair is to believe there isn't a savior. I can't tell you how many men I've worked with who believed they were scum and therefore acted like scum.

3. FINDING AND STAYING ON THE ROAD OF DESPERATION

Desperation is different than denial because in desperation we honestly face the horror of our sin and know we cannot do anything about it.

- We understand we cannot solve the problem by working harder.
- We cannot solve the problem by reading more scripture.
- We cannot solve the problem by going to church.
- We cannot solve the problem by cleaning up our act,
- We can't solve the problem by going to the compulsive places we have gone in the past.

The only thing we can do about the problem is confess how ugly it really is and admit only God can clean up the mess. In fact, the New Testament word for "confess" is a word that literally means "to agree with" and therefore carries the meaning that we agree with God that our sin is wretched and ugly. When we confess our sin to Him and to others, we say: "**God, I see the ugliness of my sin. I agree with You it is against Your nature and Your Glory, and I'm laying it before You because it is wrong and I don't want to be there anymore.**"

Second, we need to see desperation is different from despair because even while facing the horror of our sin, we trust our Savior is able to redeem. In desperation we see the sheer horror of our sin, realize it is insurmountable to us, but in faith cry out, "*Oh, God, please have mercy.*" In faith we cry out: "*God, I know this is ugly, I know this is wretched, I know this is horrible, but I also know Your Son gave His Life and His Blood for me and Your Son's Blood cleanses me like no bleach ever known to man. It washes me whiter than wool; it cleanses me like hyssop.*" At this point, God takes me and He purifies me right in the middle of my mess. There is nothing in the world that can reach down into the depth of my soul, cleanse me and take hold of me, nothing except the love of Jesus Christ, the power of the Spirit and the embrace of the Father.

In desperation, we realize God is the only solution. All my strength, all my wisdom, all my effort is futile, but God's intervention is amazing. In desperation, I can look at the most wretched things in my heart, feel incredible pain and remorse for my sin, yet abandon myself to God as the only hope of survival, let alone salvation. As long as you and I hold out any hope in anything other than Christ, we are not truly desperate and we have not faced the depth of the real issues in our lives. As long as I believe the answer to my problem is for my wife to love me better, or for my kids to not rebel, or for my income to increase, or any other circumstance in my life to change, then I am not truly desperate, and I will not turn to God and experience His deliverance.

Desperation is an incredible opportunity to encounter God. Fortunately for us, it is in the times of desperation we discover just how great, how Almighty and how personal God really is in our lives. But this discovery requires a willingness to be broken, a willingness to ask Him to pry our fingers off the things and people we are holding on to in our attempt to make this life work. I pray you find the road of desperation.

Application & Journaling Questions

1. What evidence have you chosen to ignore, deny, pretend doesn't exist etc. that should have pointed you to your need to deal with your issues?
2. What outright lies have told to your spouse, friends etc. in order to deny your problem or deny the extent of the problem? List and describe the events around at least three.
3. What lies have you told so often or so well that even you have begun to believe them?
4. In light of the "Comparison Denial" description, how have you compared your actions and motives to others in order to avoid facing the real devastation associated with your sin?
5. How would the addict of your false self finish the following: "Well, at least I haven't ... "
6. In light of the "Minimization Denial" description, how have you minimized your sin or the consequences of your sin to others? To yourself?
7. What feelings does the thought of a complete confession invoke from within you? Terror, relief, anxiety? Explain and elaborate.
8. In light of the "Justification Denial" description, list and describe some ways you have justified your sm.
9. Read I Samuel 13: 1-15 and 15: 1- 31. What parallels can you see between your history of addiction and Saul's actions, denials and justifications?
10. How would the addict of your false self finish the following: "I know what I did wasn't right, but anyone going through would have done something similar.
11. When and how have you blamed your wife (or lack of one) for your addiction?
12. What do you need to confess and apologize to your wife concerning the way you have consciously and unconsciously blamed her?
13. How and when have you used the "denial of momentary reality" to minimize your struggles?
14. How has denial (in all its forms) served to protect you from seeing your desperate need for a savior?
15. When have you attempted to use busyness, church work, Bible study or even "spiritual disciplines" as a solution for your struggle? How long did it work for you? What is the inherent problem with trying to "work" your way out of your sin?

16. One of the primary purposes of the "Sexual History Inventory" is to help you break through your denial about the extent of your struggle and the damage it has done and continues to do in your life. What did you learn about your struggle through completing the sexual history inventory?
17. Another purpose of the inventory is to give you the opportunity to confess "everything" to a counselor, friend, or group leader and escape from the bondage of secrets. Assuming you have done that, what do James 5:16 and I John 1:7-9 say about the condemnation Satan hammers you with concerning your past.
18. *Lord Jesus, You made me a sexual being and made sexuality to be good and holy. Forgive me for abusing Your creation, for all my sexual sins with [her name]. I took something that was not mine to take and I gave away something that was not hers to have. Forgive me, Lord. I bring all these sins under Your cross and Your atonement. Wash us both with Your blood. And by Your cross I break all spirit and soul ties and all bonds with [name] which were created through those sexual acts. For by Your cross I am crucified now to [her name] and she is crucified to me (Gal. 6: 14). I release her to You totally, and ask You to restore her to You. I once again present my body and my sexuality to You as a living sacrifice (Romans 12: 1) to be Your holy temple. By the cross and Blood of Jesus, I cancel all claims that Satan has got on me through my sins (Col. 2:13-15). Jesus, restore my strength, restore my heart, restore my sexuality in a holy bond with You, and You alone. I pray this in the Almighty Name of Jesus.*
19. How hard is it for you to hold on to the reality of your forgiveness and the truth that God will use your confessions to bring healing and transformation?
20. When have you experienced the ditch of "Despair?"
21. Use a struggle from the last few days to illustrate the difference between guilt and shame.
22. Complete the "My Identity In Christ" exercise at the end of this chapter. How did you feel while saying those things to yourself? Which of those statements are the most difficult for you to believe? Why? (Please don't skip this assignment as many have found it to be one of the most significant assignments they have done in their recovery journey.)
23. Commit to doing this exercise at least once a week for the next two months and see what kind of difference it makes in your recovery.
24. Do you see yourself as a "sex addict" or as a Christian who struggles with "sexual addiction"?
25. What significance do you see in your own life in making this distinction?
26. Describe a time in your life where accepting your shame, i.e. believing a lie about your identity, has led to a spiral of sin and despair.

27. What would it look like in your life for you to face honestly the horror of your sin and at the same time hold on to the sufficiency of Christ's payment for your sin?
28. When have you experienced God's intervention during a time of desperation? Describe what you felt, thought and learned during that time.
29. Take the next 15 minutes and write a prayer that begins, "Dear God, I am so desperate for you and your intervention in my life "

My Identity in Christ

Read these statements out loud to yourself, speaking your name. Use emphatic expression to reinforce exactly who you are in Christ. You might even consider doing this in front of a mirror.

- ❖ I am God's child for I am born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God that lives in me and abides forever (I Pet. 1:23)
- ❖ I am forgiven of all my sins and washed in the blood of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:7; Heb 9:14; Col 1:14; I John 2:12; I John 1:9).
- ❖ I am a new creation (II Cor. 5:17).
- ❖ I am a temple where the Holy Spirit lives (I Cor. 6: 19)
- ❖ I am delivered from the power of darkness and Christ brings me into God's kingdom of light (Col. 1: 13)
- ❖ I am redeemed from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13)
- ❖ I am blessed (Deut. 28:1-14; Gal. 3:9)
- ❖ I am a saint (Rom. 1:7; I Co. I:2; Phil. 1:1)
- ❖ I am holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:4)
- ❖ I am established to the end (I Cor. 1 :8)
- ❖ I have been brought closer to God through the Blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13)
- ❖ I am victorious (Rev. 21 :7)
- ❖ I am set free (John 8:31-33)
- ❖ I am strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10)
- ❖ I am dead to sin (Rom. 6:2,11; I Pet. 2:24)
- ❖ I am more than a conqueror (Rom. 8:37)
- ❖ I am a co-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17)
- ❖ I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise (Eph. 1 :13)
- ❖ I am in Christ Jesus by His doing (I Cor. 1 :30)
- ❖ I am accepted in Jesus Christ (Rom. 15 :7)
- ❖ I am complete in Him (Col. 2:10)
- ❖ I am crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20)
- ❖ I am alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5)
- ❖ I am free from condemnation (Rom. 8: 1)
- ❖ I am reconciled to God (II Cor. 5: 18)
- ❖ I am qualified to share in His inheritance (Col. 1: 12)
- ❖ I am firmly rooted, established in my faith, overflowing with thankfulness (Col. 2:7)
- ❖ I am a fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God (Eph. 2:19)

- ❖ I am built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20)
- ❖ I am in the world as He is in Heaven (I John 4: 17)
- ❖ I am born of God and the evil one does not touch me (I John 5: 18)
- ❖ I am His faithful follower (Rev. 17:14)
- ❖ I am overtaken with blessings (Deut. 28:2; Eph. 1 :3)
- ❖ I am His disciple because I have love for others (John 13:34-35)
- ❖ I am the light of the world (Matt. 5:14)
- ❖ I am the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13)
- ❖ I am the righteousness of God (II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:24)
- ❖ I am a partaker of His divine nature (II Pet. 1:4)
- ❖ I am called of God (II Tim. 1:9)
- ❖ I am chosen (I Thess. 1:4; Eph. 1 :4; I Pet. 2:9)
- ❖ I am an ambassador of Christ (II Cor. 5 :20)
- ❖ I am God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph. 2:10)
- ❖ I am the apple of my Father's eye (Deut. 32:10; Ps. 17:8)
- ❖ I am healed by the wounds of Jesus (I Pet. 2:24; Is. 53:5)
- ❖ I am being changed into his image (II Cor. 3: 18; Phil. 1 :6)
- ❖ I am raised up with Christ and am seated in heavenly places (Col. 2: 12; Eph. 2:6)
- ❖ I am beloved of God (Col. 3:12; Rom. 1:7; I Thess. 1:4)
- ❖ I am one in Christ! Hallelujah! (John 17:21-23)
- ❖ I have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5; I Cor. 2:16)
- ❖ I have obtained an inheritance (Eph. 1: 11)
- ❖ I have access by one Spirit to the Father (Eph. 2: 18)
- ❖ I have overcome the world (I John 5:4)
- ❖ I have everlasting life and will not be condemned (John 5:24; 6:47)
- ❖ I have the peace of God which transcends all understanding (Phil. 4:7)
- ❖ I have received power, the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)
- ❖ I live by and in the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2)
- ❖ I walk in Christ Jesus (Col. 2:6)
- ❖ I can do all things in and through Christ Jesus (Phil 4:13)
- ❖ I shall do even greater things than Jesus did (John 14:12)
- ❖ I possess the Greater One in me because greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world (I John 4:4)
- ❖ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God (Phil 3: 14)

- ❖ I always triumph in Christ (II Cor. 2:14)
- ❖ I have my life hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3)
- ❖ I play with a stacked deck in my favor. (Rom. 8:28) (Even things that appear to be curses, God turns into blessings for me.)
- ❖ I have original glory, as an image bearer, created in the image of God (Gen. 1 :27)
- ❖ I have been given a new heart that is good, that wants to be pure and to walk in God's ways (Ez. 36:25-27; Jer. 31:31-34)
- ❖ I am God's child. My sin has been paid for by the blood of Jesus.

Sexual History Inventory

Sexual History Inventory

Warning: We strongly discourage going through this with your wife until you have met with your counselor/group coordinator and have clarity about what needs to be shared and what doesn't. We believe in full disclosure. I.e. we believe she needs to know the "breadth and depth" of your sexual sins against her. However, some of the specific details in this inventory may be more than she needs at this time. (See the Chapter "Telling Your Wife About Your Struggle" for a discussion about what should be shared.) It may be helpful to photocopy these pages so they can be shredded or destroyed once you have finished the process.

Many times men are not aware of the historical factors that fight against them in their recovery. Your personal sexual history plays a significant role in your current struggle and honestly facing your history is a huge step in your fight for freedom. The purpose of this questionnaire is three fold:

1. To help you see the full range of your sexual struggles;
2. To provide a clear picture for those assisting you;
3. And to break the shame of hidden secrets.

When you find the courage to share your answers to these questions with a counselor or another individual you will have brought most of the darkest areas of your life out into the light. Please resist the temptation to lie or minimize as the more honest you are in your answers the more helpful this will be for you.

- What year were you born?
- When and how did you learn "the facts of life"?
- What did your parents teach you about sex?
- At what age did you begin to discover your sexuality, e.g. body changes, first erections etc.?
- Did you have anyone to talk to about your discoveries?
- Did anyone ever touch your penis or your bottom in ways that now seem "strange"?
- Did you see any women nude or topless as a child? If yes, how often and what were the circumstances? (e.g. "until I was nine, my mother would allow me in the room while she showered, dressed etc.")
- Do you have any childhood memories of touching a woman's breast, vagina or bottom?
- Do you have any childhood memories of being asked to touch a woman's breast, vagina or bottom?
- Do you have any childhood memories of touching a man's penis or bottom?

- Do you have any memories of being asked to touch a man's penis or bottom?
- At what age were you first exposed to pornography?
- When and how were you introduced to masturbation?
- How many times per week did you masturbate?
 - At age 8 _____
 - At age 12 _____
 - At age 14 _____
 - At age 16 _____
 - At age 18 _____
- As a boy, did you ever experiment sexually with other children?
- If yes, in what activities did you participate?
 - Group masturbation (only on self).
 - Mutual masturbation (stimulating each other).
 - Simulated intercourse with clothes on.
 - Simulated intercourse with clothes off.
 - Oral sex.
 - Anal sex.
 - Other: Please explain _____.
- How old were you when you first remember these activities?
- How often did this occur?
- How old were the other children?
- What sex were they?
- As a child, did you ever use any objects, (pillows, stuffed animals etc) for simulated sex?
- As a child, did you ever have or attempt to have sex with any animals?
- How old were you when you started dating?
- How old were you the first time you touched a female's breasts, vagina or bottom beneath her clothes?
- How old was she?
- How old were you the first time a female touched your penis? How old was she?
- How old were you the first time you ejaculated during sexual play with someone else?

- How often did ejaculation occur during non-intercourse activities?
- How old were you the first time you had intercourse?
- How old was your partner?
- How long did the relationship last?
- How many times did you have sex with that first partner?
- How did the relationship end?
- How many individuals were you sexual with prior to marriage? (Sexual in a broad sense including masturbation, oral sex, anal sex etc.)
- How many times have you been married?

Answer each of the following questions, for each of your marriages:

(If you have multiple marriages, please just use numbers for each one, i.e. 1. I was 18. 2. I was 24, 3. I was 31 and do this for all questions related to your marriages.)

- How old were you when you married?
- What was your sexual involvement before marriage? (e.g. regular petting, mutual masturbation, intercourse, oral sex, other:)
- How long into the marriage did personal masturbation resurface?
- How long into the marriage before you started looking at pornography?
- What has been the nature of your pornography? (Write the number 1 for things you did once or twice, 2 for things you used occasionally and 3 for things that are or were a regular part of your acting out.)

- Swimsuits.
- Soft-core (Nudity).
- Hard-core (Showing penetration).
- Magazines.
- Videos/DVD's.
- Going to porn shops/theaters.
- Internet pictures.
- Internet movies.
- Trading or exchanging pictures/video files with others.
- Posting pictures of self on dating or other sites.
- Posting provocative, nude or sexual pictures of self on websites.
- Male homosexual pornography.
- Lesbian pornography.
- Cross-dressing or transvestite images, video, etc.

- Sexually oriented chat rooms, discussion boards etc.
- Live web cams (only watching).
- Live web cams (watching and showing yourself).
- Cybersex with others online.
- Pornography depicting rape and/or violent acts.
- "Snuff" porn (Porn depicting murder and sex combined).
- Legal "barely 18" porn designed to look like child pornography.
- Child pornography.

- How did your pornography use progress over time?
- At your worst place, how much time per week did you spend looking for or at pornography?
- At your worst place, how many times per week did you masturbate?
- Did anything in your pornography use shock or scare you? If yes, what?
- Do you currently have any pornography files in any of your computers?
- Are you willing to give someone access and permission to do a scan on your computer for any files? If yes, who and when?
- Do you currently have any pornographic magazines, DVD's or videos? If yes, where are they?
- When you had pornographic materials, where did you hide or keep them? Have you revealed this hiding place to your spouse?
- Have you ever been to a strip, nude or topless establishment?

If yes, answer the following:

- When was your last visit to a strip, nude or topless establishment?
- (Month) ____.
- (Year) ____.
- How much did you usually spend when going to a strip, nude or topless establishment?
- What is the most you remember spending?
- How much do you estimate you have spent in these clubs in your adult life?

While in a strip, nude or topless establishment:

- Have you masturbated?
- Has anyone touched your penis?
- Have you ever been masturbated by someone else?

- Have you ever touched a woman's breasts?
- Have you ever touched a woman's bottom?
- Have you ever touched a woman's vagina?
- Have you ever exposed yourself?
- Have you ever engaged in oral sex?
- Have you ever engaged in intercourse?
- Have you ever ejaculated on yourself?
- Have you ever ejaculated on someone else?
- Have you ever had contact with a stripper or other worker outside the club? If yes, describe the nature of that contact?
- Complete the following: During my life, I have visited a strip, nude or topless establishment not more than times _____.
- Have you ever tried to "window peek?"
- If yes, when, where, how often and when was the last time?
- Have you ever watched someone have sex?
- Have you ever played with yourself or masturbated while peeking?

Answer the following questions for each of your marriages: (Again use numbers to differentiate between your marriages.)

- While married ...
- Have you repeatedly fantasized about having sex with anyone else?
- Have you propositioned anyone else?
- Have you posted on or looked at singles or dating sites on line or elsewhere?
- Have you been propositioned?
- Have you kissed anyone else?
- Have you touched any other woman's breasts?
- Have you touched any other woman's vagina?
- Has anyone else touched your penis?
- Have you touched anyone's penis?
- Have you been masturbated by anyone else?
- Have you masturbated anyone else?
- Have you engaged in oral sex with anyone else?
- Have you engaged in intercourse with anyone else?

(If the answer to any of the above questions is yes, please go back and give approximate dates and details, i.e. how many times, how many different people etc.)

- What is your current pattern and frequency of masturbation?
- How many times in past 24 hours? How many times in past week? How many times in past month? How many times in past 6 months?
- Have you ever masturbated in a public restroom, i.e. at work, a mall, theater etc? If yes, where and when?
- Have you ever masturbated in a public place? If yes, where and when?
- Have you ever masturbated someplace where the chance of someone seeing you added to the "thrill"? If yes, where and when?
- Have you ever masturbated anyplace where you knew someone could see you? If yes, who, where and when?
- Have you ever attempted to restrict your breathing while masturbating?
- Have you ever called a phone sex number? If yes, how often? When was the last time, and how much money have you spent on phone sex?
- Have you ever stood nude in front of a door or window where someone could see you?
- Have you ever been involved in a sexual act in a public place (Including public restrooms)?
- Have you ever exposed yourself to anyone you were not involved with? If yes, how many times?
- Do you feel any sexual attraction to members of your own sex?
- Have you had any sexual experiences with a member of your own sex? If yes, please elaborate.
- Have you ever had an ongoing sexual relationship with a member of your own sex?
- Have you ever licked or sucked a penis?
- Have you ever engaged in anal sex?
- Have you ever attempted to pressure your wife or other partners to engage in anal sex or any other sexual acts they were uncomfortable with?
- Has your wife or other sexual partners complained you were too "pushy" in regards to sexual issues?
- Has anyone ever taken nude photographs of you?
- Have you ever made a video of you having sex?
- Have you ever made a video of anyone having sex?
- Have you ever taken nude or sexual photographs or videos of anyone?
- Have you ever secretly photographed or made a video of anyone changing clothes, going to restroom, having sex etc.?

- Have you ever watched a sexual partner have sex with someone else?
- Has anyone ever watched you have sex with someone?
- Have you ever been involved in a threesome or group sex?
- Have you engaged in wife or sexual partner swapping?
- Have you ever secretly but intentionally brushed against a woman's breasts?
- Have you ever gone to a public place and deliberately brushed against a female's breasts, bottom, etc.?
- Have you ever used verbal or physical threats to get sex?
- Is there anything in your sexual history you are afraid to discuss with your sponsor, counselor etc?
- Is there anything in your sexual history you think might be illegal? If yes, please describe.
- Have you ever choked your sexual partner during sex?
- Has a sexual partner ever choked you during sex?
- Have you ever committed rape? (Forced sexual activity, date rape, etc)
- Have you ever been accused of rape?
- Have you ever been physically abusive to a member of the opposite sex?
- Have you ever been accused of sexually touching someone you shouldn't?
- Have you ever been accused by a family member of sexually touching them? If yes, please explain.
- Have you ever sexually touched a family member (including brothers, sisters, cousins, etc.)?
- Has a family member ever sexually touched you (including brothers, sisters, cousins, etc.)?
- Have you ever had sexual contact with a family member (sister, step-sister brother, cousin, etc.)?
- Have you ever had sex with a prostitute?

If yes, what sexual acts occurred with a prostitute:

- Oral Sex
- Anal Sex
- Intercourse
- Masturbation
- Bondage
- Domination

Since becoming an adult (in relation to anyone under the age of 18 and three or more years younger than you) have you ever done any of the following? If yes, please give month and year of the event and the age of the minor.

- Touched a minor's vagina.
- Touched a minor's penis.
- Attempted to masturbate a minor.
- Exposed your penis to a minor.
- Had a minor touch your penis.
- Attempted to have a minor masturbate you.
- Masturbated a minor.
- Had a minor masturbate you.
- Engaged in oral sex with a minor.
- Had intercourse with a minor.

Complete the following statements:

- During my lifetime I have had not more than _____ adult (over the age of 16) sexual partners.
- During my lifetime I have had not more than _____ sexual partners who were under the age of 16.
- During my lifetime I have had sexual contact with not more than _____ prostitutes.
- Have you ever misused or been addicted to any illegal drugs or prescription medications? If yes, what, how long and when was the last time you used?
- Do you struggle with alcohol? If yes, briefly describe your history.

Complete each of the following statements:

- I have consumed not more than _____ alcoholic beverages during the past twenty-four hours. I have consumed not more than _____ alcoholic beverages during the past seven days.
- I have consumed not more than _____ alcoholic beverages during past thirty days.
- I have consumed not more than _____ alcoholic beverages during past ninety days.
- Have you ever combined your struggle with drugs or alcohol with your sexual struggles? If yes, please describe how and when.
- Have you ever had sex with someone who was too drunk or too high to actively participate or to know what was happening?
- Is there anything else in your sexual history you think might be relevant to your recovery or anything else you have never told anyone or you would like to confess and bring into the light?

How did I get HERE?

Jeff, one of the men in our groups describes his early experience vividly:

I still remember the day I discovered my father's stash of pornographic magazines. I was about thirteen and we were moving. As my mom and I packed up some things in the garage we found a satchel. When we opened it, all I saw was a brief glimpse of a woman's breast before my mother quickly closed the satchel and put it in a box along with some of my dad's other things. I don't remember her reaction, (other than the fact she tried to get the box in the truck as quickly as possible) because I was completely focused on memorizing the location and exterior of the box. When we arrived at the new house, I made certain I saw that box come off the truck and carefully watched as my father put it in the attic. The very next time I was home alone, I went straight to the attic and began devouring my father's magazines.

The secrecy added to the excitement and the shame. I was terrified my father would discover that I found his stash. I was afraid he would be angry--his outbursts at me were quite common in those days--and I was terrified he would either get rid of it or at least put it someplace I could not find it. Therefore, every time I got down his satchel, I always made sure I kept the magazines in the exact order I found them. I also made certain to put/he satchel back in the exact same place, in the exact same position. This ritual of secrecy is one I recreated on an almost daily basis. I was a "latch key kid" at the time so I learned to medicate my loneliness through the excitement of the sexual materials. Discovering the satchel also drove me to explore every possible hiding place which led to finding more magazines, pornographic video tapes, and even sex toys. These discoveries destroyed my image of my father who was a leader in the church and presented himself and his family as "model Christians ..." We looked good on the outside, but I knew the secret and that secret was a burden I carried in silence.

Day after day, I used his materials to fuel my growing addiction. Instead of dreading being home alone, I began to look forward to it and resented the occasions when someone else was in the house. Pornography and masturbation became my only true friends, companions and even family. My father's secret had become my secret and it was destroying us both.

Understanding The Starting Point

When I first met Jeff, he had not connected this incident as being the starting point for his addiction. He was like most men are when they first come for help. Imagine you went to sleep in your own bed one night and woke up the next morning in the middle of a dark forest in a heavy fog. You have absolutely no idea where you are or how you got there, let alone how to get home. Unfortunately, this is often how individuals feel when they first come for help. They know they are in a dark place and while they may know some of the things they have done on the way, they rarely have a clear sense of the path that led them there.

No, understanding where things went wrong will not automatically take them back home; however, it is often an important part of the recovery journey. It is often a part of understanding one's own story which in turn begins to make real change possible.

So, how did we end up here, lost in the darkness of sexual addiction? Let me suggest three primary reasons:

1. Lack of relational joy;
2. Family dysfunctions;
3. Pain relief.

The Brain-Joy Connection

Current research, aided by advancements in X-Ray technology, provides concrete evidence that joyful relationships powerfully impact the human brain.

The right orbital pre-frontal cortex depends on joyful connections to fire the chemical processes that build the actual tissue of this crucial portion of the brain. Modern, secular scientists have determined this right orbital pre-frontal cortex is the "control center" that empowers us to override our impulses. They have defined "joyful connections" as "being with someone who is truly glad to be with me."

This means every time you experience being with someone who is truly glad to be with you, that connection adds to the brain tissue of your control center which is the part of your brain that has veto power over your cravings.

This process is so critical that joy is the only emotion an infant will seek on his own initiative. You have undoubtedly, though probably unknowingly, participated in this building process with children you knew, as well as the cute baby in the cart in front of you at the grocery store. Jim Wilder calls the process "Climbing Joy Mountain." It is where you make eye contact with a child and smile. He smiles back and it escalates until he breaks out in a laugh, a giggle and, then eventually turns away. He turns away because his control center has had all the stimulation it can take for the moment. When he has rested enough to "climb" again, he will look back to see if you are willing to play more. This pattern of alternating joy and rest could be called "brain weight training." Each repetition literally builds tissue in this extremely important part of the child's brain.

It is important to note "joy connections" cannot be faked or met in any form other than the direct face to face connection between two individuals. Your left side (and especially your left eye) always communicates the true emotions emanating from the right side of your brain.

This results in non-verbal connections passing from your right brain to the right brain of the other person. Simply put, authentic "joy connections" do not result from the words you speak; they result from the non-verbal communication expressed through your face.

This communication takes place at the rate of six cycles per second, which is faster than your ability to be consciously aware you are communicating, let alone what you are communicating.

In other words, in the time it takes you to become aware you are angry; you have already communicated your anger to the other person, received their emotional response to your anger and started transmitting your response to their response.

This is why parents who are always pre-occupied with work, the newspaper, the computer or anything else for that matter, don't really connect with their children. They may say the right words, but their children are more in tune to the non-verbal messages they communicate about being bothered, annoyed and even angry at the child's interruptions. While no one can connect with a child all the time, every child needs regular emotional connection from their parents and other adults in their world.

Lack of Relational Joy

This connecting process has huge implications for understanding how we got lost in the first place.

While we can grow the control center of our brain throughout our lives, its primary growth takes place during early childhood.

The first two years are especially critical and we are ultimately dependent upon the adults in our world.



If a mother is able to regulate her emotions (because she has a well developed control center), and if she is relationally available, she will naturally pass this to her child. If however, she is angry, afraid or absent, (either physically or emotionally) the child's development will be greatly stunted.

Too often, a child learns his desire to connect, his desire to "climb Joy Mountain", leads to the painful reality of disappointment. He seeks joy, but his smiles are not met by other smiles. His emotions are not reflected and joined, but instead ignored and dismissed. He seeks to climb Joy Mountain but the adults in his world are too busy trying to survive or get ahead to slow down long enough to connect with him. The result is he ends up with a void he seeks to fill in a myriad of ways.

Counterfeit Joy - the road to sexual addiction.

Very early in life, many discover pornography, sexual fantasy, masturbation and even other forms of sexual acting out serve to ease the pain of not having people in their world connect with them. They also discover sex can be a counterfeit source of the very joy they so long to receive. Think of it this way: What a boy needs is the experience of others who are "glad as glad can be" to be with him. He needs the smiles and the right-brain to right-brain connections that would build his joy center.

Pornography, however, provides something that feels similar, but fails to produce the growth he needs. Remember, right brain to right brain connection only occurs in face to face relational interactions: pictures on a page or unsynchronized images on a screen cannot trigger the processes that build the brain tissue of the control center. However, images, fantasy and sexual behaviors powerfully stimulate the pleasure center of the brain which distracts him from his true need. Also, what seems to communicate, "I'm as glad as glad can be to be with you" to a boy more than a beautiful woman appearing naked as the object of the boy's delight? It is close, but no cigar. It provides excitement, pleasure and chemical activity in the brain, but not in the right place. It becomes candy for the brain: lots of calories, but no protein. It feels good but has no sustaining power.

The discovery of this **counterfeit joy** often leads a boy to develop an orgasm centered sexuality. He experientially learns orgasm floods the pleasure center of the brain with endorphins, enkephalins and other chemicals that feel good and thus distract him from the pain he feels from being unconnected. God intended this flood of pleasure to occur in a face-to-face encounter with his bride so he would joyfully bond with her. The isolated boy, however, becomes bonded to a fantasy instead of a person.

Satan thus twists the very gift God intended to be a pinnacle of joyful connection and uses it to further teach a boy he is ultimately alone. He experiences the powerful feelings and sensations of sex but finds no one with whom he can connect. Lack of relational joy is one of the primary paths most of us took into the forest of sexual addiction.

Family Dysfunctions

Family dysfunction comes in many forms and all of them make a child vulnerable to sexual issues.

Even if you have no reason to suspect sexual addiction in your family of origin, you undoubtedly are aware of other issues. Many of our men grew up with an alcoholic mother or father. Many remember significant issues of physical, emotional and verbal abuse. A rigid religious home, while sometimes looking good on the outside, inflicts incredible damage. While we do not want to send anyone on a "witch hunt" concerning their family of origin, we believe it is essential to honestly face the reality from which we came.

Often, addicts come from families of codependents, and codependency on the surface often looks good and even "normal" Codependents are caretakers who pick up everyone's problems and seem to always "do the right thing" even though the pull beneath their efforts is an ugly attempt to meet their own needs and desires. Looking at issues in our siblings and in their spouses can help us realize things don't really match up with the rosy picture we so often paint of our family of origin. A phrase we use quite often in our groups is, "Normal is what we know, no matter how screwed up it is and we spend our whole lives trying to get back to normal" Just because things seemed "normal, " doesn't mean they were good.

Pain Relief, sex as medication.

A third primary reason we ended up lost in the forest of sexual addiction is we learned early in life that **sex is a powerful pain medication.**

Sex is a powerful pain-relieving drug that eases both physical and emotional pain. Using **sex to medicate** often becomes an individual's primary way to cope. He uses it initially to address the attachment pain mentioned earlier and then continues to use it throughout life to ease the pain of living in a fallen world. This becomes especially evident when dealing with trauma and abuse.

The Many Faces of Abuse

When I mention abuse, many often assume that doesn't apply to them. I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say things like, "*I had a pretty good family and at least I wasn't abused.*" "*Normal is what you know*" and many times our "*normal*" sounds pretty horrific to those with the benefit of viewing things from a different perspective. Abuse is far too often thought of as the bad things that happen to other people.

Therefore, the path that led us into our sexual addiction must be explored. That exploration is often painful and difficult.

However, Jesus promised there is freedom in the truth. Beginning to understand how you got lost in the forest of sexual addiction will pay great dividends as you journey out of the forest and into the light.

Definitions of Typical Wounds

Wounds come in a variety of shapes and sizes. You might think of abuse as a very strong word that refers only to a narrow group of experiences that are the experience of a few. Take a look at the following definitions. Does this change how you perceive abuse? Does it change how you look at what happened in your own story?

Abandonment involves being disregarded, ignored, forsaken or discarded. All human beings are biologically hardwired to attach to another human being. Attachment includes the need to bond, connect, belong and be loved. Physical abandonment can be experienced when a child feels left alone through divorce or death, when working parents leave a child [home alone or] with a caregiver and when everyone in a family is too busy to connect or when physical needs are neglected. Emotional abandonment occurs when a child feels that a parent or caregiver does not value or accept them or neglects or dismisses their emotional and developmental needs, causing a child to lose a sense of who they are, what they feel or what they need.

Betrayal can be defined as the breaking of any implied or stated commitment of care. It is experiencing a closed heart from someone who is either positionally responsible or has communicated that they will provide care and love. Betrayal attacks the dignity of another in its failure to love well, leaving the person betrayed to feel marred, marked, manipulated or ignored. Anger, contempt, loss of trust, loss of faith, numbness and apathy (who cares?) are often connected to the experience of betrayal.

Emotional Abuse may be verbal or nonverbal. Verbal abuse includes defensive anger, which is used to threaten, intimidate or distance another. It may include name calling, cursing, criticism, continual blame-shifting, threats and the use of "zingers" as well as being argumentative, changing the subject, withholding support, humiliating, shaming, dominating, controlling, forgetting, denying and rewriting the past.

Nonverbal abuse occurs through emotional abandonment. It may be experienced in degrading gestures such as "flipping the bird", the silent treatment, looking down and shaking one's head, refusing to acknowledge someone when he/she enters the room, turning one's back to another when support is needed and/or appropriate. Economic unfairness may also be a form of nonverbal abuse as well as the unspoken use of "male privilege."

Emotional abuse may be active or passive. Active emotional abuse (of the type listed above) damages because of its presence. Passive emotional abuse damages because of its absence. The following are examples:

- Not being cherished and celebrated by one's parents simply by virtue of one's existence.
- Not having the experience of being a delight.
- Not having a parent take the time to understand who you are -- encouraging you to share who you are, what you think and what you feel.
- Not receiving large amounts of non-sexual physical nurturing -- laps to sit on, arms to hold, and a willingness to let you go when you have had enough.
- Not receiving age-appropriate limits and having those limits enforced in ways that do not call your value into question.
- Not being taught how to do hard things -- to problem solve, and to develop persistence. Not being given opportunities to develop personal resources and talents.

Physical Abuse is any kind of physical harm from hair pulling, squeezing, hitting, slapping, pushing, and kicking to use of a weapon to injure and/or kill. Not being given adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical and dental care.

Sexual Abuse involves any contact or interaction whereby a vulnerable person (usually a child or adolescent) is used for the sexual stimulation of an older, stronger, or more influential person. (It should be noted here that the stronger or more influential criteria may be real or perceived. Sexual abuse may even occur between two same age children when one child is compliant in nature and the other is the leader.)

Sexual abuse is much broader than forced, unforced, or simulated intercourse. It includes any touching, rubbing or patting that is meant to arouse sexual pleasure in the offender. It may also involve visual, verbal, or psychological interaction where there is no physical contact.

Sexual abuse may also include the abuse of a submissive adult by a person in a position of power, such as a priest, pastor, therapist, boss, doctor or teacher. It may also include forced sexual contact, manipulated or through threats when the aggressor is a romantic interest, colleague, co-worker, spouse or any other known person.

Visual Sexual Abuse may involve exposing a victim to pornography or to any other sexually provocative scene, including exposure to showering, intercourse, or various states of undress.

Verbal Sexual Abuse involves an attempt to seduce or shame a child by the use of sexual or suggestive words. (Occasionally, however, this shaming may be unintentional. The child internalizes the words that a careless adult uses toward her and grows up bearing that false image.)

Psychological Sexual Abuse includes interactions where a child is regularly used to play the role of an adult spouse, confidant, or counselor.

Spiritual Abuse is the misuse of Scriptures to manipulate, control, or demand submission. Male authority may be misused to justify inappropriate behavior or deny another the right to attend church or engage in worship. Legalism (non biblical rules) demanding performance to attain a good status in the church is non biblical and gives a false sense of self-righteousness. Any minimizing the pain of the wounded as unspiritual, needing to pray more, read the Bible more rather than entering their pain can feel re-abusive. Ministries to the wounded need the protection of church leaders. Failure to believe reports of abuse in the church and not valuing a person's voice, regardless of age or gender, gives entrance to abuse.

Spousal Abuse or Battering can be defined as follows: A pattern of coercive behaviors used to establish control over another person through fear, intimidation, emotional abuse or social isolation; often including the use of or threat of physical or sexual violence.

Spousal sexual abuse involves any contact or interaction whereby a vulnerable person (the spouse) is used for the sexual satisfaction, control or revenge of the other spouse.

Satanic Ritual Abuse includes abuse from families who have been involved in the occult (sometimes for generations), people who have been pulled in as children themselves and are programmed to be perpetrators and people from secret lodges, often from the wealthy, educated segments of society. These abusers hide in churches, professions, lodges, and community service organizations. They derive their power to perform supernatural acts by calling Satan to manifest himself in the group rituals, meetings, and ceremonies. Their intent is to gain power through harming and killing the innocent. The most innocent would be an unborn baby. All that they do is a designed perversion of Christianity. The leaders are addicted to evil, engaging in progressively more evil activities. They misuse alcohol and drugs to dull their consciences and the pain of what their addiction demands that they do. Their consciences become seared. They serve Satan.

Application & Journaling Questions

Important: The content of this chapter is weightier and likely more difficult than previous chapters. Please take the all the time you need to process the material and answer these questions. Please do not hurry.

1. How does the imagery of waking up in a dark forest in a heavy fog connect with your experience of sexual struggles?
2. When have you felt a "joy connection" with another person?
3. What memories do you have that provide insight into your father's level of connection with you, your siblings and/or other children? I.e. is your memory of your dad one of a "Shadow Dad?" He was there, but usually reading the paper, absorbed in television, work or something else?
4. What memories do you have that provide insight into your mother's level of connection with you, your siblings and/or other children? I.e. do you remember your mother actively engaging you or do you remember her running ninety miles a minute attempting to keep the house together, clothes washed, food on the table and working a part time job?
5. How do you see the idea of turning to pornography as a "counterfeit" joy connection played out in your childhood and early adolescence? How about now?
6. What do you know about your father's struggle with sexual issues?
7. If you discovered you father's pornography, how does your story compare to Jeff's?
8. How have you interpreted your father's "disconnection?" as a rejection of you? As his issue? Do you think your interpretation is correct?
9. What do you know about your mother's struggles with sexual issues?
10. In what ways can you see her struggles impacting you _____.
11. Do you have any memories of sexual encounters, experiences etc. with other family members? If yes, describe what you remember.
12. Other than sexual issues, what other dysfunctional ways of relating do you see as you look back upon your family of origin?
13. What struggles, addictions etc. are you aware of in your siblings and/or their spouses? How are they similar to yours? What does the presence of these struggles combined with your own struggle tell you about your childhood home?
14. How does the expression, "Normal is what you know, no matter how screwed up it is" apply in your family?
15. When have you been consciously aware of using sex as a form of medication?
16. What was your initial reaction to reading the list and description of different types of wounds?

17. Re-read the description of "Abandonment." Describe any memories or evidence you have of "abandonment" in your life.
18. Re-read the description of "Betrayal." Describe any memories or evidence you have of "betrayal" in your life."
19. Re-read the description of "Emotional Abuse." Describe any memories or evidence you have of "emotional abuse" in your life."
20. Re-read the description of "Physical Abuse." Describe any memories or evidence you have of this in your life.
21. Re-read the description of "Sexual Abuse." Describe any memories or evidence you have of "sexual abuse" in your life?
22. Re-read the description of "Visual Sexual Abuse." What memories or evidence do you have of "sexual abuse" in your life? What memories do you have of watching anyone of the opposite sex undress, bathe etc. in your presence late enough in your life that you can remember it? Are there any memories of anyone being sexual with themselves or someone else that you observed?
23. Re-read the description of "Verbal Sexual Abuse." Describe any memories or evidence you have of "verbal sexual abuse" in your life.
24. Re-read the description of "Psychological Sexual Abuse." Describe any memories or evidence you have of "psychological sexual abuse" in your life.
25. Do you have any history of being abused by your spouse physically, emotionally or sexually? If yes, please describe.
26. Are you aware of any history of "Satanic Ritual Abuse?" If yes, we recommend you connect with a counselor trained in this area before attempting to dive into your trauma. This is a good idea with most trauma, but especially with SRA.

The fellowship of the
FORGIVEN

We need a new battle strategy.

I John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin."*

James 5: 16 *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."*

The Promise of Victory

I John 1:7 ends with the following promise, " ... *the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*" The word "*purifies*" comes from the realm of the assayer and has many powerful implications.

The analyst who assays (performs chemical tests on) metals places the raw gold into a very hot fire that causes the impurities to float to the top. This is removed with a mesh and what remains behind is pure gold.

This is what John promises as an outgrowth of walking in the Light. As we live transparent lives, as we stop hiding our mess from one another, our junk starts coming to the surface and it isn't pretty. If I trust the process, then God removes the impurities and reveals more of the true beauty He placed within me.

No amount of mess can destroy that glory. You were created in the Image of God and no sin, no shame can remove your Glory from the core of your identity.

Victory Requires Transparency

Victory requires transparency. I know this first hand because I spent twenty plus years trying find victory on my own. I tried everything I could imagine to break free from my addiction. I tried prayer. I tried more discipline.

I tried punishing myself when I failed. I even went as far as removing the Internet browser from my laptop so the only thing I could do was email.



Yet, I still crashed. So what finally made the difference? Doing the one thing I was absolutely terrified to try: **opening up and being honest about my struggle with other men.** Coming out of hiding turned out to be a huge key in my recovery from a sexual addiction. When I finally opened up and started being brutally honest with a few safe men about my real struggle, I discovered victory.

There are guys that have devoured many books and materials on how to get free from sexual addiction but they remained in isolation. Some of these men have learned enough to white knuckle it for a few months or in a couple rare cases almost a year. However, we have yet to see a man truly walk into freedom who didn't build significant relationships.

On the other hand, we have had men who struggled with the materials. They didn't do well in school so reading, journaling etc. are incredibly difficult for them. However, they learned to come to group once, twice or even three times a week and make a phone call every day. Well guess what? They started getting healthy. They began experiencing freedom.

1 John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin."*

Some people think "walking in the Light" means getting it right; if we do it right like Jesus did (WWJD), then we have fellowship with one another. However, look at **verse 8**, *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."*

"Walking in the light" isn't about getting it right; it is about getting it out in the open. *"Walking in the light"* means living a transparent life. It means we are who we are and we stop trying to prevent others from seeing the truth of our reality. It means we don't wait for people to discover our mess, we tell them about our mess. (People who you trust of course!)

Victory Requires Radical Grace

Now, it is important to note that truly walking in the light is only possible in the context of radical grace. You can only have the courage to live transparently after catching a glimpse of God's **complete forgiveness**. Understanding God's complete and total acceptance empowers you to inch out from within the shadows to reveal yourself to others.

If what you reveal to others is met with acceptance and grace, you will find it much easier to inch out a little further. That is the real power of a recovery group. When you finally find the courage to confess part of your sin and instead of receiving judgment, receive grace, your heart begins to come alive and you long for more.

Unfortunately, far too many have experienced judgment instead of grace and out of their hurt have vowed to never come out of the shadows again. If this is you, don't let Satan win that easily. The fact some Christians don't understand grace doesn't mean grace does not exist. However, the only way you will discover radical grace is to take the risk and come out of hiding.

Therefore, to help us find the courage to risk disclosure, John gives two incredible promises to those who courageously walk in the light. First, John promises true **Fellowship**. "*If we walk in the light... we have fellowship with one another.*" The irony of stepping out into the light is, while it is one of the most terrifying things we will ever do, it is also one of the most endearing things we will ever do.

It is terrifying because we think if anyone truly sees me, if anyone truly sees my mess, they will be repulsed and reject me. Yet, it is endearing because when we are open and honest about our sin, something Divine within the hearts of compassionate believers invariably rises to the surface.

That is real church. That is real fellowship and it has nothing to do with eating, working together or any of the lesser ways we so often attempt to create fellowship in our modern and misguided church. True fellowship, true connection, true community comes when we lay down our masks and walk in humble transparency with one another. It is an incredibly powerful and beautiful thing.

Victory Requires Confession

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

James doesn't say confession brings forgiveness, he says it brings healing. Jesus purchased my forgiveness at the cross and applied it to my account the instant I put my faith in Him. Healing, however, is a mysterious process God works in many different ways. James describes one powerful form of healing that comes as a by-product of living transparently - confessing our sins to one another. Confession, however, requires a context of community – a small group who you can trust with your struggles.

Victory Requires Time

Very few battles are won quickly and this battle is no exception. Jim Wilder provides insight into this process when he says he is often asked by other counselors why clients will meet with them for months or even years before finally sharing some great pain or trauma, that once it is out in the open, provides the counselor with incredible insight into the individual's struggles and path for healing.

His answer is that counselors should not be surprised because **you can only face as much trauma as you have joy strength to face**. Often, what an individual needs is time in relationship building up joy strength so he is strong enough to look under the hood at the real issues.

Particularly for those who are in recovery, it is essential to be in authentic, joy-producing relationships that can build joy strength and assist in returning to joy. If a person in recovery is not empowered by joy, it may be impossible to face the pain that is part of recovery. In fact, the amount of joy strength available needs to be higher than the amount of pain. Therefore, building joy through life-giving relationships is often the first part of recovery.

They find relationships based on sharing the real struggles of life. While it often scares the daylights out of them, it also begins building and repairing incredibly neglected places in their hearts and even in their physical brain. As we noted previously, advances in modern brain science have shown the key element in building the control center of our brain is relational connection. Even "non-Christian," secular scientists have said relational joy (defined as being with someone who is truly glad to be with me) is the key ingredient for building actual brain tissue in the right orbital prefrontal cortex. This portion of our brain is:

... extremely important for a wide range of processes, including autobiographical memory, self-awareness, response flexibility, mind-sight, and the regulation of emotions. These are the very processes shaped by attachment. The development of the prefrontal cortex appears to be profoundly influenced by interpersonal experiences. This is why our early relationships have such a significant impact on our lives. However, this important integrating part of the brain may also continue to develop throughout the life span, so we continue to have the possibility for growth and change.

This helps explain why the men who make phone calls, connect in groups, and build genuine relationships start getting healthy. They literally grow the control center of their brains so they are more able to regulate their emotions and be themselves even in times of stress, fear and pain. It also sheds light on why Scripture speaks so much about joy, fellowship and community. God knows for us to be healthy and have the strength to live free from addiction to sinful ways, we must connect with our brothers and sisters in Christ in joyful ways.

Having enough joy strength is fundamental to a person's well being. We now know that a 'joy center' exists in the right orbital prefrontal cortex of the brain. It has executive control over the entire emotional system. When the joy center has been sufficiently developed, it regulates emotions, pain control and immunity centers; it guides us to act like ourselves; it releases neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin; and it is the only part of the brain that overrides the main drive centers - food and sexual impulses, terror and rage.

Victory Requires Community

Satan also understands the power of community and constantly battles against it. Often after a man has a crash, he hears messages like, *"Don't tell anyone."* *"Everyone else is doing great. They will think you are a loser."* *"They are going to finally tell you to leave and not come back because you aren't serious and haven't really repented."* *"Don't go to group tomorrow. Wait until next week when you can at least say, 'I had a crash last week, but I've been clean for eight days now.'"*

He plays on a man's pride, fears of rejection and ultimately shame to try to keep him separated from the very place where he can humble his pride, find acceptance and freedom from his shame. No, making a phone call or going to group after a crash is never easy, but it is the path back to the road of recovery. Don't allow Satan to convince you that you have crashed too hard or too many times to ever show your face there again. If your group understands the grace and heart of God even a little, their response will always be a genuine, *"Great to see you. We are glad you are here!"*



Application & Journaling Questions

1. What has been your understanding of "walking in the light?" What fears come to surface in the context of transparency? What hopes rise to the surface in the context of real fellowship?
2. Have you experienced judgment and/or rejection related to your sexual struggles? If yes, when and what impact has that had on you? If no, is that because you have never really risked disclosure or because you were blessed with safe people?
3. Have you ever experienced "radical grace?" If yes, when and how? If no, what does the concept stir in your heart?
4. What was your understanding of "fellowship"? How has your understanding of "fellowship" in I John 1:7 changed since joining the group?
5. Who could you truly be honest with? Who knew your struggles, fears and joys? Who knew your worst "pig pen" experiences?
6. How does the image of the analyst who assays (performs chemical tests on) metals apply in your life?
7. Which is more difficult for you: working through materials or making relational connections? Why? What are you doing to actively pursue relationships?
8. Describe how you felt the first time you confessed your sexual sins to another man (or group of men) and allowed them to pray for you?
9. What role do you see James 5: 16 playing in your recovery?
10. How difficult is it (or would it be) for you to come to group the day after a crash with pornography, masturbation or other sexual sins? What "thoughts" go through your head?
11. If you could quantify your joy strength on a scale of 1-100, where do you think it would be right now? Where was it when you started the group? If it has increased, what do you credit for the increase? If you think it has dropped, what do you blame for the decrease?
12. Other than the sexual content, how do conversations with others in recovery differ from your conversations with other men in your life?
13. How does the information about the "control center" of your brain strike you? Is it surprising to you to learn that at any age in life you can actually grow brain cells by experiencing relational joy?
14. How have you seen Satan battle against your attempts to experience true community?

15. Many men have dropped out of group for a while and then called or showed up and were surprised we were genuinely glad to see them. They expected demeaning lectures about not taking recovery seriously or even the possibility of rejection. How does it strike you when someone is glad to see you even if you have crashed or walked away from recovery for a period of time?
16. Of the "Ten Suggestions" for building joy, which seem easy for you to incorporate into your group experience? Why?
17. Of the "Ten Suggestions" for building joy, which seem difficult for you to incorporate into your group experience? Why?

Suggestions For Building Joy Strength

- Make group meetings a very high priority. Go to multiple groups per week if at all possible, especially during early recovery.
- Make a "check in call" every single day to someone in your group.
- Connect with others from your group for lunch, coffee or even a round of golf, a good movie or some other enjoyable activity. Yes, it is good to check in, but it is also good just to do something or talk about things you enjoy. You could also connect with someone and work through a lesson together.
- Don't be afraid to smile and laugh. Yes, group times are often heavy and sometimes even depressing. However, there are moments, comments, stories etc. that are just down-right hilarious. Enjoy them and enjoy one another; laughter is actually a healing activity.
- Smile and greet one another with joy.
- Be intentional about eye contact. Many times, especially when someone is down about a crash or struggling with shame, they will look at the floor, ceiling or anyplace other than at the people with whom they are talking. Since joy is communicated most powerfully through eye-to-eye contact, intentionally encouraging it can be very helpful.
- Ask questions that invite others to tell you truthfully how they are doing and what they are thinking. Listen carefully without interrupting.
- Make a commitment to get to know the others in your group. Work to understand their fears, wounds, joys and especially their glory.
- Treat one another with dignity and respect. When disagreements arise (which they will) do everything in your power to leave on good terms so both parties feel affirmed.
- Use touch when appropriate. Bear hug greetings and even strong handshakes are awkward for some, however, they can help break down defenses and build joy strength.

- Don't be afraid to bless someone in surprising ways. A gift, a card, a book or offering to help with a project can touch someone's heart, lighten their load and build joy connections for everyone.
- Play a game together. Some of the guys have started staying around after group to play board games. While playing, they laugh, talk and genuinely enjoy one another's company and it is very encouraging both to them and to their leaders.

Motivation, consequences,
and rewards

The Value of Rewards and Consequences

I must admit when I first heard an addiction therapist talk about personally imposed consequences for negative behaviors, I cringed because I thought it would just become part of the shame, work harder, crash again cycle so typical of addictions. Jim Wilder's "Recovery From Sexual Addiction" videoconference explains consequences and rewards very clearly: Wilder makes a great case for the fact, that "*addiction is the catastrophic failure to reach adult maturity.*" (Maturity levels and personal value are completely separate issues.)

Consequences and rewards could be an important part of the recovery process is because one of the required tasks to move from the child to the adult level of maturity is **learning to do the hard things**. Infants, and even most children, do only what they want to do. One of the keys to helping a child learn to do the hard things is to give him motivation, reasons and rewards for sticking with and accomplishing difficult tasks. The same is true for addicts who are stuck in child level maturity.

Therefore, one key to help you stop acting out behaviors is to develop a system of **personal rewards and consequences** that encourages doing the things you truly want to do (i.e. recovery) and provides immediate, negative consequences for the things you do not want to do. (i.e. acting out)

You do not want to live the rest of your life based on rewards and consequences; you want to grow into adult level maturity where your actions stem from your identity in Christ. However, in early recovery, motivations can be the difference between freedom and bondage so don't allow your pride, (i.e. "*I'm not a child, I don't need a carrot on a stick*") to keep you from setting healthy, non-shaming, non-punishing, consequences for negative behaviors and for giving yourself legitimate rewards for recovery related behaviors.

It is helpful for you think through your rewards and consequences clearly and establish a written plan. The goal of this chapter is to provide some principles we hope will help you in that process.

Motivation Ebbs and Flows

Most men are highly motivated when they first start recovery. Typically, they have been caught by someone (wife, boss or others.) or they have crossed another line they said they would never cross and the pain is so bad they know they have to change. Initially they profess they are willing to "do whatever it takes" to change and get healthy. It is helpful to take advantage of this initial motivation with as much recovery work as possible while the motivation level is high, because it is only temporary. The further they get from the pain of a crash the less motivated they become. That is why self-imposed consequences and rewards can be incredibly helpful. They help strugglers find the time, energy and focus to do the things that open them up for God's healing and transformation process.

Inappropriate Understanding of Consequences

Consequences must never be about shame. Consequences are not a substitute for healing. Consequences may help, but they are not the answer. We must deal with the broken part of our hearts.

Consequences must motivate, not tear down. You cannot shame yourself out of a shame-based addiction. God does not shame you so don't do it to yourself.

Consequences must not be a form of "self-flagellation." You must not see consequences as a "spanking" for bad behavior. *"I screwed up so therefore I must punish myself because I am a bad boy."* While the distinction between natural consequences and punishments are difficult to maintain, it is essential to keep them separate. If you are constantly looking over your shoulder anticipating the next blow, you cannot walk in real freedom.

Consequences must not be a form of "penance." Sometimes men will look at their consequences as payments to atone for bad behavior. That is a form of legalism denying the fact that the only payment that can truly atone for sin is the sacrifice of Jesus.

This approach, however, reveals two major issues for many men:

1) It reveals the mistaken belief he can purchase his wife's forgiveness. The reality, however, is forgiveness can never be earned, it can only be given. Nothing he does will ever make up for the hurt he inflicts upon his wife through sexual sin. Yes, she can choose to forgive, but this a choice of her will, not a transaction that can be obligated by paying a steep enough price.

2) It reveals a deep-seated codependency. It reveals that he sees the disharmony with his wife as the primary problem and reconciliation with her as the desired solution. While disharmony is a problem and reconciliation is a good thing, the primary problem is the impact of sin on his understanding of his relationship with God. If he continues to live estranged from and avoiding God, does it really matter if he is "reconciled" to his wife?

Appropriate Understanding of Consequences

Personal consequences are better than external consequences. Addicts want to believe their actions do not have consequences. Every action has a reaction. Even when we think we have "gotten away with it," the ripple effect of our sin often creates tidal waves in areas where we don't even see the connection. One of the most obvious consequences is the damage done to a man's marriage. I have worked with a number of men who knew if they acted out again, they would lose their wife and possibly their children.

While that motivated them enough to initially dive into recovery, it often became fertile soil for resentment. It also allowed Satan to constantly weave the message: "*If you screw up, your wife is going to hammer you.*" This makes her out to "be the bad guy" and accentuates the lie that life is about "getting everything right." If you depend on your wife, your counsellor, your accountability partner or anyone else to be your personal, behavior policeman, you will eventually resent and, at least subconsciously, blame him/her for removing something "good" from your life. If, however, you set your own personal consequences -and follow through with those consequences - the rebellious part of your flesh has much less with which to work, and Satan's lies lose some of their power.

Feel the sting! - and retrain the brain

Consequences are better sooner than later. As a general rule, self-imposed consequences will be most effective when they are closely connected to the negative behavior. Some men in early recovery wear a large rubber band around their wrist and whenever they realize they are going to a sexual fantasy or looking at a woman for sexual gratification, they snap the rubber band as hard as they can. This "behavioral modification" can be especially helpful because it starts **retraining the brain**. Previously, whenever a man went down the road of sexual fantasy, his body released endorphins and enkephalins in the pleasure center of his brain. Over many years, he literally became "addicted" to the chemical hit that came from fantasizing or objectifying women. The rubber band introduces a new stimulus of pain that interrupts the pleasure. Over time, the brain changes the association of fantasy from pleasure to pain and he becomes more capable of defeating the pull to fantasy.

Developing a System of Personal Rewards

It is essential to use your valued currency. For many men this naturally is **money**. If a man decides acting out with masturbation will cost him R500, he will have extra motivation to make a phone call instead of going to the bathroom to relieve the stress. It is also helpful if the money goes to someplace or someone they would never give to otherwise.

For other men, time and "sweat equity" has a much greater impact. For example: One guy decided on a consequence of digging a three by three by three hole in his yard if he acted out. The first offense would be in the back yard and the second in the front. The man was a yard fanatic and after digging a hole in his backyard, he was motivated enough he didn't have to dig one in the front. Another man committed to walking to work for a week - rain or shine and he hates to walk! Be creative and find something that costs you enough that it truly motivates.

Use different currency values for different levels of offense. For example: if you have a personal boundary that says you will not watch television between the hours of 11 PM and 6 AM, but watch until midnight one night, you have not been true to your word. While it isn't the same as acting out sexually, it also cannot be ignored. It is an affront to your integrity and these kinds of "slips" often lead to major crashes. While consequences for slips should be less than consequences for crashes, be careful the consequence still has enough bite to impact your motivation level.

Rewards and Consequences Work Together

Use rewards as well as consequences. Addicts are as likely to be pleasure seekers as pain avoiders and God has victory available for both. It may sound childish to reward yourself for going 90 days without acting out or for completing the "five dailies" every day for a week. However, if it helps motivate you to make those goals, don't be afraid to use it.



If you are struggling to make phone calls, read material, go to meetings or praying then take a R500, put it in an envelope and consider it spent. If at the end of a specified time, you have met your goal, spend R500 on something you've wanted but wouldn't go out and buy. If you haven't met your goal, send it to a charity organization. Decide on something specific you want to buy and write it as well as the consequence on the outside of the envelope, then put it someplace you will see every day. You could also do the same by making a voucher for a day off next month. If you meet your recovery goals, you get to use that day for something you enjoy. If you don't, you commit to using that day to picking up trash on the side of the highway, cleaning out the garage or something you don't want to do.

Defining Slips, Crashes & Sobriety

We use the term "**crash**" to describe any action that violates one's definition of sobriety. I.e. if a man's baseline of sobriety is "*No pornography and no masturbation*" then he should consider either of those activities a crash.

A slip would compose of actions that, while not breaking sobriety, are still problematic and/or sinful.

It is also important to note these definitions may change over time. Often, as a person progresses in recovery he realizes other behaviors are just as damaging and/or compulsive as the things that initially drove him to seek help and recovery. Sometimes actions deemed as compulsive or destructive early in recovery can be viewed as acceptable later on in recovery.

It is important to remember intimacy with God and recovery are the goals.

Sobriety is a signpost on the journey but losing your sobriety does not mean you have lost your recovery. **Slips and crashes have consequences.**

However, if you learn from them, they can actually become a significant part of your recovery. **Romans 8:28** even applies our sin. "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose.*" We must be willing to submit to God's plan of restoration in our lives, but the good news is through the Blood of Jesus, God can and does redeem all things.

Application & Journaling Questions

1. What natural consequences have come from your sexual sins?
2. What external consequences do you fear could come if you continue to act out sexually?
3. When are you able to "do the hard things?"
4. What motivates you to do difficult tasks?
5. How have you seen your motivation rise and fall during the course of your recovery work?
6. What do you value more, your time or your money?
7. What currently motivates you to "do recovery?"
8. When have you attempted to "punish" yourself into acting properly? How has that backfired on you? If I fail to pray, read, make phone calls or go to a meeting more than twice in one week, I will for each day I don't do these recovery behaviors.
9. When have you attempted to pay "penance" for your sexual sins? What does that say about your understanding of God and your wife?
10. If you had R 500 you could spend on yourself, your wife, your kids or anyone you know, what would you love to buy? (Don't write what you think you should buy, but something that would really make your heart rejoice.)
11. What would be a legitimate goal to accomplish that would be worth celebrating with the R 500?
12. Take some time to pray and ask for God's leading to establish a healthy motivational system for helping your recovery progress. Then supply a consequence or reward for each of the following:
 - If I go 30 consecutive days of making phone calls, praying, going to meetings and reading material every day, I will reward myself by ...
 - When I make 90 days of sexual purity I will reward myself by ...
 - If I have a "slip" I will impose a consequence of ...
 - If I have a second "slip" within one month I will impose a consequence of _____ and increase it by for each additional occurrence.
 - If I have a "crash" I will impose a consequence of ...
 - If I have a second "crash" within one month I will impose a consequence of _____ and increase it by for each additional occurrence.
 - When I make one year of sexual purity I will reward myself by ...

13. **Personal Definition of Sobriety:** At this point in my understanding, sexual sobriety means I will abstain from the following behaviors:

14. **Personal Definition of "Slips."** While you could never make a complete list of things that could and should be considered a "slip," listing things you know are issues in your life can be very helpful in staying accountable, nipping slips in the bud, maintaining sobriety and progressing in your recovery.

Personal Boundaries

Better Safe Than Sorry

Start off tighter than you think you need. Our addictive personality always wants to "live on the edge" and hates to give up any freedom. Many times, men will say, *"I'll start with my boundary here and if I crash then I will tighten it."* The problem with this approach, however, is it takes a crash to find out the boundary wasn't tight enough. How many times do you have to act out sexually, hurting yourself and others before you find what truly is safe?



Better Firm Than Flimsy

Boundaries are meant to be firm and consistent. Never move a boundary in the "heat of the moment." If a boundary can be changed whenever you feel like it, it isn't a boundary. I remember a speaker at a youth rally when I was in high school making a very applicable point. He said, "Don't wait until you are in the back seat to decide 'how far is too far.' If you do, you have already decided nothing is too far." A general guideline we recommend is to wait 24 hours after talking to your sponsor before changing any boundary. This gives you time to think about it as well as consider the feedback of someone who cares for you and knows your addictive tendencies.

Learn from the Fellowship of the Forgiven

Hopefully by now you have developed relationships with one or more men who have traveled further down the road of recovery than you have. Listen to them and learn from their experiences. You don't have to fall into the same pits they fell into; you can learn from both their failures and their victories. Talking through boundary issues with your sponsor and/or at group meetings is very helpful.

Realize that even if you don't have an immediate crash, violating a personal boundary often sets you up for a crash down the road. That is why it is so important to talk to your counsellor and others in recovery whenever you break a boundary. Often, men will break a seemingly minor boundary on Monday and then have a crash on Thursday and not see any connection until they talk about it at group or with their counsellor.

Many times Satan will give us just enough slack between the action starting the process and the crash itself - we don't learn the connection between our actions and the pain that follows. It is essential we live in the light, not just about our "crashes" but also about the times we violate our own boundaries.

Share your boundaries with others close to you. If you create boundaries but never tell anyone what they are, you always have an "out" for not keeping them. However, if you tell members of your recovery group and your counsellor then you have others who can hold you accountable to keeping your word. They won't be your personal policemen, but they will be able to hold your feet to the fire when you break your boundaries. You should also share your boundaries with your wife for several reasons. First, it will be an encouragement to her to know you are taking positive steps to walk in healthier places. Second, she will be less likely to sabotage your recovery by asking you to do things she isn't aware are your "triggers." Third, while you should never ask her to be your policeman or even the one who holds your feet to the fire (that's what your recovery group is for) simply knowing she knows your boundaries will often be just the added incentive you need to stay inside your fences.

A Means to an End

Remember that external controls are essential, but they are not the answer. You cannot set enough boundaries to keep you from acting out. You must deal with the root issues beneath your actions. The addict within your false self will always find ways around the boundaries if the root issues go unhealed. However, don't allow the addict to use this truth to say boundaries are worthless. If you have easy, unaccounted access to sexual stimuli, odds are high you will relapse. While there will always be stimuli outside your ability to control, most men discover when they are faithful to control the things they can, the things they can't become more manageable.

Personalize Your Boundaries

Similar to consequences and rewards, boundaries are also very personal in nature. Some things that cause one man to struggle don't even register on another's radar screen. That is why it is essential you take the time to customize them for yourself. The discipline of creating and holding to these boundaries will also help you set boundaries in other areas these exercises do not address.

Internet Boundaries

As someone who struggles with sexual stimuli, (i.e. you have a Y Chromosome) you must always consider the Internet as a loaded weapon. Handled correctly, it can be a very effective tool for many things; handled incorrectly, it can be an instrument of death.

Having an unprotected computer in front of you is like playing "Russian Roulette" or like an alcoholic with a drink in his hand saying, "*I'm just holding it for a friend.*" The following are various boundary levels for protecting yourself from Internet porn and cybersex. It is important to remember strong boundaries initially can be the difference between sobriety and the pigpen. You will be much better off in the long run setting strict boundaries (especially early in recovery) and staying sober than soft boundaries and continual relapses.

1. **No Internet under any circumstances.** This sounds harsh, but you really can live without it and sobriety is worth more than a few sports stories, live stock quotes, etc.
2. **Supervised Internet.** Your spouse or someone who knows your struggle must be physically in the room with you. This generally requires a password or other type of lock on the computer or on the Internet connection as a general "**I won't use the computer**" rarely works. It also requires you to be willing to surrender your "**right to be upset**" when they have other things to do or cannot be physically in the room with you.
3. **Extremely Limited access.** If you use Internet Explorer you can go under the "Tools" to "Internet Options" and click on the "Content" tab to bring up the "Content Adviser." Click "Enable" and then you can set it to only allow you to access "Approved Sites." You can then enter safe sites and have very limited Internet access. You will be asked to enter a password at which time you can have your spouse or someone else create and enter it. They can still have full access to the Internet by using their password.

Problems:

- Whoever has password must be diligent about turning the password back on after using.
 - You must not have any other browsers on your system.
 - You must refrain from creating excuses to have your spouse or whoever has the password from unlocking the computer.
4. **Limited access.** There are programs available like <http://www.browserlock.com> that only allow you to go to their approved websites plus any sites the "supervisor" adds to the "approved sites list." Many Internet Service Providers offer "Parental Controls" that can be set at various levels of accessibility.
 5. **Monitored Internet.** Several programs will monitor all your Internet activity and send reports to an "accountability partner" about any suspicious activity. The strength of this approach is while it doesn't stop you from going any place, it does bring your activity into the light. The best accountability software we have found is **Covenant Eyes**.

6. **Filtered Internet.** Covenant Eyes and others have "filter" options that limit sites you are allowed to access. The problem, however, is filters don't catch everything and this often becomes a challenge (i.e. "*can I find a site the filter doesn't catch or a way around the filter?*"). Filters can, however, be helpful though you should use a monitoring program.
7. **No boundaries necessary.** The fear of being caught, respect for others or other reasons make acting out seems impossible. (Be careful and wise. As you cut off other sources, computers that were once safe may become new temptations.)
8. **No boundaries & continual bondage.** Just thought I'd remind you: you do have a choice. It isn't a very good one, but it is still a choice.

Email Boundaries

Another place individuals often have difficulties is with their email. Unfortunately, SPAM is a reality of life on line. Porn SPAM is most insidious, in part because it hits in your arena of struggle, and in part because pornographers have been on the cutting edge of Internet technology since its inception. They constantly find ways around filters and into your inbox. However, there are things you can do to limit your exposure. One of the most important things is to turn off pictures in your email. If you use Outlook go to "Tools," "Options," "Security," "Change Automatic Download Settings" and check the box that says "**Do not download pictures.**" You can still access pictures in your email, but you will have to take an extra step and make a conscious choice. It won't stop you from going to the pigpen if you so choose, but it will prevent the pigpen from being brought to you. You can also do the same thing on most web based email systems if you simply look for the setting. If your email does not have this option, then get a different email account.

Another helpful safeguard is to set your SPAM filter on a high setting. Yes, this will potentially cause you to miss a few emails. However, it is much better to miss an occasional legitimate email than to have a crash because SPAM started you down a dangerous path. It would also be helpful to think through how and when it is safe for you to look through your SPAM folder. Early in my recovery, it wasn't safe at all. Even the subject lines of porn emails were enough to put me in a bad place. While I didn't act out by opening those emails, they caused much unnecessary struggle. I eventually discovered I was better off not even scrolling through the list looking for emails I needed to rescue.

You also need to develop a habit of emptying your trash folder or "double deleting" all porn SPAM emails. You may be in a good place to delete a SPAM at one moment and then later on give in to the pull to go cyber dumpster diving. Consistently emptying your trash folder is a helpful preventative. Of course, if all this sounds too complicated or risky, you can disconnect from the Internet. Remember, it is better to be "out of the loop" than to be "out of the house."

Boundaries Worksheets

Internet Boundaries Worksheet

1. My history with pornography on the Internet has included the following activities:

- Swimsuit models, bodybuilding, etc. Sexually explicit stories, articles, fantasy Soft-core porn (Nudes)
- Hardcore porn (Penetration)
- Chat
- Games: those with sexual under or overtones, fantasy or role playing
- Other:

2. In the past I have had gone to inappropriate sites on the following computers:

- My personal computer
- My spouse's computer
- My work computer
- Internet connected cell phone
- Public computers (i.e. libraries, churches, etc.)
- Other computers: co-workers, friends, relatives etc. (List below)

3. What restrictions will you place on each of the following? (multiple #s are OK)

- My personal computer
 - My wife's computer
 - My work computer
 - Internet connected cell phones
 - Public computers (i.e. libraries, churches, etc.)
 - Other computers: (List below)
-
- How much time will I allow myself to be "on-line" each day?
 - How much cumulative time in a week?
 - What times of the day/night do I need to avoid the Internet?
 - What times of the day/night are safe for me to be on the Internet?
 - Who will I talk to before making "exceptions" or changing any boundaries? (check all that apply):

- No one: I am the master of my universe.
- A group member.
- My counsellor.
- My spouse.
- Other: _____.

4. If I look at inappropriate material while honoring my boundaries, I will ...
(check all that apply)

- Keep it to myself, wallow in the shame and repeat the cycle over and over.
- Contact my counsellor immediately.
- Increase my boundary and communicate to my counsellor, my spouse and others who need to be "in the know."
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: _____.

5. If I violate a boundary but do not look at any inappropriate material, I will ... (check all that apply):

- Keep it to myself and question the need for boundaries in this area.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: _____.

6. If I violate a boundary and look at any inappropriate material, I will ...
(check all that apply):

- Keep it to myself, wallow in the shame and repeat the cycle over and over.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Impose a consequence of _____
- Other: _____.

7. Before reducing any Internet Boundaries, I will discuss it with the following (check all that apply):

- No one; I am the master of my universe.
- My counsellor.
- My spouse.
- Other: _____.

Television Boundaries

Long before I had any real understanding of the depth of my struggle, I understood television was a huge pull for me in the sexual realm. We didn't have cable because I knew if I had easy access to R-rated movies and the things offered late at night I would be in trouble. However, even "over the air," fuzzy TV is not really safe. Every man I have worked with struggling to get out of sexual addiction has expressed difficulties that often started with television. Today, even family shows and sporting events are often challenging because of sexually provocative advertisements. For many, the "sexual tease" of a lingerie ad is just enough to start his mind down a slippery slope leading to acting out. Remember, Paul says in *II Corinthians 10:5*,

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

We have realized taking every thought captive requires us to set healthy boundaries around our television habits. Through the years, we have had individuals who gave it up completely during early recovery, and they found that was a tremendous blessing. Others have learned to set clear boundaries and have done well. Unfortunately, some have crashed repeatedly until they either gave up the fight for purity or else learned the hard way they can't stop on ice at 80 km per hour. Please use the questions that follow to help you make wise decisions concerning your television habits.

1. How has TV been part of your acting out history?
2. How would "taking captive every thought" change your TV viewing?
3. I will talk to _____ concerning my TV habits (check all that apply):

- No one; I don't watch TV.
- No one; I am the master of my universe and what I watch is my business.
- My counsellor.

- My spouse.
- Other: _____.

4. I will place the following boundaries on TV (Check all that apply):

- None, I don't believe it is relevant to me.
- Limit myself to per week.
- I will only watch after doing my recovery work for the day.
- I will not watch until I have made days of sobriety.
- I will not watch alone.
- I will cancel cable and not reconnect until I have made days of sobriety.
- I will set the V-Chip on the TV to block out shows rated above _____.
- I will not channel surf (usually this requires leaving the remote on the TV as it is physically impossible for a man to have a remote in his hand and not flip channels).
- I will only watch shows I have predetermined to watch. (selected by a guide not by surfing).
- I will only watch specific shows (Listed and shared with someone from my recovery group).
- I will not watch between the hours of _____ and _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

5. If I violate a boundary and have a crash within one week of breaking the boundary, I will ... (check all that apply):

- Keep it to myself, wallow in the shame and repeat the cycle over and over.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Discuss it with my recovery group at the next meeting.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

6. If I violate a boundary but do not have a crash I will ... (check all that apply):

- Keep it to myself and question the need for boundaries.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.

- Discuss it with my recovery group at the next meeting.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

7. Before changing any TV boundaries, I will discuss it with the following (check all that apply):

- No one: I am the master of my universe.
- My wife.
- My counsellor.
- Other: _____.

Movie Boundaries

Movies are part of South African culture as well as a significant part of many people's lives. Movies can simply be a form of entertainment that stimulates our imaginations, our hopes and our dreams. Sometimes they can even awaken good and healthy parts of our hearts and be part of the recovery process. Often, however, the sexual content becomes obstacles for those attempting to heal from sexual struggles.

They are a struggle on two primary fronts:

1. First, even some of today's PG-13 movies contain "brief nudity" and many R rated films would have been classified as X-Rated in the not so distant past. Especially in early recovery, even a hint of nudity, sexual innuendo or provocative scenes can start a man back into downward spirals.

2. Second, movies become stumbling blocks when we use them to "escape" in unhealthy ways; i.e. to avoid real struggles and live in the realm of fantasy or distraction.

It is also fairly common for movies to be a gateway to pornography. A man may start out watching something as innocent as an old John Wayne western and then progress to something questionable and end up at the video store with an "adult DVD."

For these and other reasons, it is essential you take an honest look at your history, patterns and struggles and make wise and healthy boundaries concerning what movies you watch, where you watch them and with whom you watch them.

1. How have movies been part of your acting out history?

2. Describe a time when you thought you were in a "good place" but found yourself watching something for the purpose of sexual gratification. (i.e. you went into the video store to rent "A War Story" and came out with something very different.)

3. I will talk to _____ concerning my movie habits (check all that apply):

- No one; I don't watch movies.
- No one; I am the master of my universe and what I watch is my business.
- My spouse.
- My counsellor.
- Other: _____.

4. I will place the following boundaries on video establishments (check all that apply):

- None, I don't believe this is relevant to me.
- I will not enter any establishment that rents or shows "adult" films.
- I will not enter the "adult room" of any video store.
- I will only rent from grocery stores where I am likely to be seen by others.
- I will only rent from _____.
- I will not enter any video store alone.
- I will call before entering and upon leaving any video store.
- Other: _____.

5. I will place the following boundaries on "movies" (check all that apply):

- None, I don't believe it is relevant to me.
- Limit myself to movies per month.
- I will only watch a movie after doing my recovery work for the week.
- I will not watch any movies until I have made days of sobriety.
- I will not watch any movies alone.
- I will not watch any rated PG-13 movies.
- I will not watch any rated PG-13 movies alone.
- I will not watch any rated R movies.
- I will not watch any rated R movies alone.
- I will not watch any movie without checking with someone who knows my struggle and who has seen the movie and says it is "safe."

- I will not watch any movies saying "Brief nudity" or "nudity" in the rating box*.
- I will not watch any movies saying "Sexual situations" in the rating box*.
- I will not watch any movies between the hours of ___and ___.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

*Don't blindly trust rating designations, as there is sometimes skin without the designation. www.pluggedin.com is a great resource for pre-screening movies

6. If I violate a boundary and have a crash within one week of breaking the boundary, I will ...

- Keep it to myself, wallow in the shame and repeat the cycle over and over.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Discuss it with my recovery group at the next meeting.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

7. If I violate a boundary but do not have a crash, I will ... (all that apply):

- Keep it to myself and question the need for boundaries.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Discuss it with my recovery group at the next meeting.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

8. Before changing any movie boundaries, I will discuss it with the following: (check all that apply):

- No one: I am the master of my universe.
- My wife.
- My counsellor.
- Other: _____.

Travel Boundaries

One very difficult place for most men in recovery is when they travel either for work or for pleasure. Very few things stir up the addictive juices like being in a different town, staying in a hotel and having unaccounted for time and money. Even something as simple as a two-hour layover opens the possibility of purchasing an adult magazine, calling phone sex lines or even soliciting a prostitute. An overnight or weeklong stay opens a myriad of unhealthy and ungodly choices. It is therefore essential you plan ahead and do everything you can to prepare for the attacks and opportunities Satan will place in front of you.

- How frequently do you travel for work? For pleasure?
- What percentage of your business travel is "required" and what is "voluntary?"
- How has travel been part of your acting out history?

I personally marvel at the men in our groups who travel frequently for business and have learned to take whatever measures they need in order to protect themselves. Most of what follows comes from the experiences of these men. Many of these tips can be "undone" relatively easily. However, "undoing them" requires specific action and a conscious choice to act out rather than accidentally stumbling onto something or allowing the fog of addictive deception to lead you blindly.

- Only stay in hotel rooms with your wife or with another Christian man who knows your struggle. (Don't, however, assume staying with someone makes other boundaries unnecessary. Many men have crashed while their wife was at the gift shop, in the shower, or even asleep in the same bed.)
- Call ahead and have the TV removed from the hotel room.
- When you first enter the room, unplug the TV and remove the batteries from the remote. You can even take the batteries to the front desk or throw them away.
- Set the V-Chip or other parental controls on the TV to not allow any shows rated Rand TVMA, that contain nudity or sexual situations etc.
- Disconnect the co-ax cable from the TV.
- Only watch specific shows, i.e. the news, Sports-center, Monday Night Football etc. Place the remote on the TV and only change to specific channels. I.e. instead of clicking through the channels go to "safe" channels: CNN, E-TV, Discovery channel, Travel channel, etc.
- Never channel surf. Absently flipping through channels is a disaster waiting to happen. Leave the remote out of reach.
- Call someone from your recovery group every time you enter your room and have them pray for and with you for protection.

- Stay out of the hotel sports bar and other drinking establishments.
- Honor your Internet boundaries: You may want to set a boundary that you will only use your laptop in the hotel lobby or other public places.
- Honor your TV and movie boundaries: You may want to have an even stronger set of boundaries for when you are away from home.
- Carry only an emergency cash supply and give an accounting of every penny to someone upon your return. (Today, you can purchase anything and everything with a credit or debit card. The advantage of the cards is they always create a record that helps eliminate secrecy.)
- Have all interaction with female clients, co-workers, customers etc. in public places.
- Call and talk honestly with someone from your recovery group if you sense any attraction to anyone while away from home.
- Stay out of book, gift, and convenience stores etc. that sell pornographic materials.
- When driving, do not get off on any exit where there is a porn shop, strip club or other adult business within sight.
- Drive in the right lane when approaching a left exit where you know there is a sexually oriented business.
- Call someone when you leave and at every stop. Be accountable for your travel time.
- Make wise choices about where you go after the workday is over. It is very common for men on business travel to go to bars, strip clubs, Hooters and other such establishments to "unwind." It will be much more difficult to say "No" if you are already in the car rather than at the hotel or someplace with an easy escape.
- Be careful about accepting gifts, meals and favors from clients, sales people etc. as this can leave you vulnerable. Honor your company's policy explicitly. If you accept a seemingly innocent gift, it may leave you feeling obligated when they ask you to go with them to the strip club, bar etc. Unfortunately, the wining and dining of clients sometimes includes sexually oriented business and favors.
- Set and maintain healthy boundaries concerning alcohol. Remember, alcohol lowers your inhibitions and therefore your ability to maintain healthy boundaries.
- Go to your boss and make a formal request for limited or no travel for the next six months.
- Resign and find a new job that does not require travel. This sounds extreme, but Jesus said, "*If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off.*" If you cannot maintain healthy boundaries in your current position, it is better to face financial consequences than to continue to act out and harm yourself, your spouse and others.

- **Stay connected to God and to others**, especially to your brothers in recovery. The most important thing you can do to stay healthy is walk in the light and stay out of isolation. With cell phones and calling cards there is no excuse for allowing Satan to isolate you even when you are on the road. Plan ahead. Make phone appointments with your counsellor and others in your group. Call someone before breakfast, someone at lunch and someone before going to your room for the evening. Be honest with them about whatever pulls you feel and allow them to minister to you and to pray over you. The power of brothers locking arms in battle is much greater than even the siren call of the hotel TV.

Take a moment to pray asking God to show you which of these boundaries you need to apply to your own travel. Then re-read the list and circle those you sense God's calling to put into place until you have achieved 90 days of sobriety. After 90 days of sobriety, repeat the process for the next 90 days. If after six months, God has granted you the grace to maintain these boundaries and to stay sober, you will probably be in a place where you will be able to establish your boundaries for an extended period of time. Again, do not lower any boundaries without talking through it with a counsellor and giving yourself at least 24 hours.

1. I will talk to _____ concerning my travel boundaries (check all that apply):

- No one; I don't travel.
- No one; I am the master of my universe.
- My spouse.
- My counsellor.
- Other: _____.

2. In addition to the boundaries circled above, I will keep the following when away from home: _____.

3. In addition to the boundaries circled, I will keep the following while driving or flying: _____.

4. If I violate one of these boundaries and have a crash within one week, I will ... (check all that apply):

- Keep it to myself, wallow in the shame and repeat the cycle over and over.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Discuss it with my recovery group at the next meeting.

- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

5. If I violate one of these boundaries but do not have a crash, I will ...

- Keep it to myself and question the need for boundaries.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Discuss it with my recovery group at the next meeting.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

6. Before reducing any travel boundaries, I will discuss it with the following:
(check all that apply)

- No one; I am the master of my universe.
- My wife.
- My counsellor.
- Other: _____.

Chemical Boundaries

Men who struggle with pornography and other sexual addictions often also struggle with **alcohol, marijuana, cocaine or other chemicals**. We have had several group members who have even been in treatment programs, counseling and recovery groups for chemical addictions who found freedom from the chemicals but continued to struggle with the sexual issues. We have also seen men who do not believe they have a problem with any "chemicals" but end up having slips and crashes connected with alcohol consumption and/or chemical use. In recovery, it is important to remember alcohol (and many other chemicals) lower your inhibitions and can lead you to do things you wouldn't normally do. Therefore, alcohol consumption must be monitored carefully as it makes it more difficult to maintain boundaries. It should also be monitored closely if it is used to "take the edge off" or to avoid feelings, emotions etc.

1. What is your pattern of alcohol consumption? How often? How much? Etc.
2. What is your history with other chemical drugs including prescription medications?
3. Do you drink/use chemical drugs when you want to celebrate? If yes, how often do you want to celebrate?

4. Do you drink/use chemicals when you feel depressed, want to take the edge off or had a long day? If yes, how often do you feel these things?
5. Can you think of any times when a crash followed within a day or two of having a drink or two or more (or other chemical use)?
6. How frequently do you consume alcohol or use chemicals while acting out?
7. What connections do you see between your chemical use and your history of acting out sexually?

Put a check mark on each of the following boundaries you believe you should apply to yourself for the next 90 days and an X for any you believe should apply for life.

- I will not drink any alcohol.
- I will not smoke, snort or take in any form any illegal chemicals.
- I will not drink more than in any 24-hour period
- I will not drink more than in any 7-day period.
- I will not drink anything stronger than _____.
- I will not drink alone.
- I will not drink with _____.
- I will only drink with _____.
- I will not drink away from my own home.
- I will monitor my drinking by making notes in a journal and if there appears to be any connection between drinking and slips, crashes or even times of intense struggle, I will stop all drinking for 90 days.
- I will talk to my counsellor before taking the following prescription medications _____.

8. I will talk to _____ concerning my chemical boundaries (check all that apply):

- No one; I don't use any drugs or drink alcohol.
- No one; I am the master of my universe.
- My spouse.
- My counsellor.
- Other: _____.

9. In addition to the boundaries above, I will place the following on myself when staying away from home: _____.

10. In addition to the boundaries above, I will place the following on myself while driving or flying: _____.

11. If I violate one of these boundaries and have a sexual crash within one week of breaking the boundary, I will ... (check all that apply):

- Keep it to myself, wallow in the shame and repeat the cycle over and over.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Discuss it with my recovery group at the next meeting.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

12. If I violate one of these boundaries but do not have a crash, I will ... (check all that apply)

- Keep it to myself and question the need for boundaries.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Discuss it with my recovery group at the next meeting.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: _____.

13. Before reducing any chemical boundaries, I will discuss it with the following: (check all that apply)

- No one; I am the master of my universe.
- My wife.
- My counsellor.
- Other: _____.

Gaming Boundaries

Many individuals who struggle with sexual addiction also use on and offline computer games as an escape. Gaming is often a gateway back into pornography or a drug in and of itself. This is especially true if you struggle with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or have other signs of an "over stimulated brain." If you play games more than once a month, even if you don't see any connections, you should discuss this with your counsellor and someone with at least a year of sobriety who understands the gaming connection.

List all games you can remember playing in the past six months. Before you say "None" consider the time you spend even on the basic games of hearts, solitaire, pinball, minesweeper etc. as well as Nintendo, PlayStation, Xbox and any hand held console.

Game	Estimated Time During An Average Week

Total Average Time Gaming: _____

1. What correlations do you see between your gaming habits and your pornography?

2. I will talk to _____ concerning my gaming habits:

- No one; I don't play games.
- No one; I am the master of my universe and my gaming is irrelevant.
- My counsellor.
- Someone in the group who has a year of sobriety and a history with gaming.
- Other: _____.

3. I will place the following boundaries on "gaming" (check all that apply):

- None, I don't believe it is relevant to me.
- Limit my gaming to time per day and time per week.
- I will only play games after my recovery work is done for the day/week.
- Eliminate specific games: (Could be due to content or tendency to consume).

4. Limit my gaming to specific games:

- I will not game between the hours of ___ and ___.
- I will not play any computer game.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

5. If I violate a boundary and have a crash within one week of the violation, I will (check all that apply):

- Keep it to myself, wallow in the shame and repeat the cycle over and over.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.
- If I violate a boundary but do not have a crash, I will ... (check all that apply).

6. If I violate a boundary but do not have a crash I will (check all that apply):

- Keep it to myself and question the need for boundaries.
- Discuss it with my counsellor immediately.
- Discuss it with a group member immediately.
- Impose a consequence of _____.
- Other: Write out and attach to this document any specific action plans.

7. Before reducing any Gaming Boundaries, I will discuss it with the following: (check all that apply):

- No one; I am the master of my universe.
- My wife.
- My counsellor.
- Other: _____.

Other boundaries I need to set concerning my gaming habits: _____.

Example of Personal Recovery Plan

Below is an example summary. The “Handouts and Worksheets” section presents a template to help guide you in creating your own summary.

Personal Definition of Sobriety

My base line of sobriety can best be summed up by "no pornography and no masturbation."

Pornography is defined as looking, watching or reading anything for the purpose of gaining sexual pleasure from anyone other than my spouse.

Masturbation includes any touching or stimulating of myself for the purpose of arousal or sexual pleasure, including but not limited to, orgasm.

Proactive Boundaries Prayer

Prayer

I commit to praying each morning and each evening and at other times as I am prompted by the Spirit who lives within me.

Phone Calls

I commit to calling someone from my recovery group every day that I am not in a group or have a face-to-face encounter with someone in recovery.

I also commit to call someone whenever I find myself struggling with extra temptation, pain, stress, conflict, or fear.

Reading Recovery Materials

I commit to read at least 10 minutes each day and carving out a 30+ minute block at least once each week.

Reflecting

I commit to answering questions and/or journaling at least 10 minutes each day and for at least one 30+ minute block every two weeks.

I understand this is a "right brain" activity that will greatly aid my recovery.

Group Meetings

I commit to attending two groups each week until I reach six months of sobriety and then at least one group each week until I reach one year of sobriety.

I understand face-to-face interactions are essential for building joy strength and developing the control center of my brain.

Face-to-Face

I commit to at least one 30 minute, outside of group, face-to-face meeting with someone from my recovery group each week.

I commit to at least one 30 minute face-to-face meeting with my sponsor every two weeks.

Other

I will carve out some time each week to do something I enjoy, e.g .. hike in the woods, ride my bike, exercise, work in my shop etc.

Protective Boundaries

Internet

I will install and keep active Covenant Eyes on my personal and work computers. I give two friends with me on the journey permission to hold me accountable by asking me anytime there are questionable items on my report. (If I have any problems, I will initiate confession and not expect them to drag it out of me.)

I will not access the Internet on any other computers.

I will not surf the net but will only look for specific, non-sexual information unless my wife or someone who knows about my struggle is in the room with full view of my computer screen.

I will not access the Internet between 10 PM and 6 AM without my wife in the same room and fully awake.

Email

I have turned off the pictures on my email accounts and will only turn them on for emails I know are safe.

I have my spam filter set on high and will not access my bulk mail folder.

I will immediately double delete any porn spam that makes it into my inbox.

I will not reply to or click on any Face Book or other social networking links or any solicitations that I do not know are 100% safe.

Television

I will not watch any TV if I have not done my recovery work for the day.

I will not watch any TV after the 10PM news without first clearing it with my sponsor.

I have had my wife set the V-Chip on the TV for TV-MA, R and "sexual content." If I discover the pass code, or find the TV unprotected I will tell her immediately.

I will not channel surf.

I will not watch any shows that I know have a strong sexual content or feature scantily clad women.

Movies

I will not go to a theater or video rental store by myself.

I will not watch any NC-17 or X rated movies under any circumstances.

I will not watch any R or un-rated movie without my wife or a Christian man who can help me make certain to use the scene skip button at the appropriate times.

Travel

If alone, I will unplug the TV upon entering my hotel room and leave it unplugged for the duration of my stay.

I will not watch TV when I am alone or when my wife/roommate is asleep.

I will not visit or patronize any establishments where servers or performers are either scantily clad, full or partially nude. If I find an establishment to be a problem, I will leave immediately.

Chemical

I will not drink more than the equivalent of two beers in any 24-hour period.

I will not take any chemicals or medications that are not medically prescribed to me, nor will I take them for any purpose other than what they were originally prescribed.

Gaming

I will not spend more than 30 minutes a day gaming. If I find myself playing two or more days in a row, I will talk to my sponsor about my need to "check out."

Other

I will not work more than 50 hours per week without first talking over the need with both my wife and my counsellor.

I will not take on any additional responsibilities at my church, my service organization or my kid's school or athletic activities without first talking with my wife and my counsellor.

I will not make any exceptions to these boundaries until at least 24 hours after talking it over with my counsellor.

I will bring any "attractions" I feel to anyone other than my wife into the light with my counsellor or another man in recovery within 12 hours of recognizing the attraction.

Consequences for slips

I will not approach my wife sexually until at least thirty days after I have confessed it to her. (I will first confess and process the crash with my counsellor before confessing to her.)

If I relapse with Internet Pornography, I will disconnect completely until I have at least ninety days of sobriety.

Rewards for making goals

Nine holes of golf on a Saturday after two weeks of keeping proactive boundaries.

Rewards for maintaining Sobriety

R500 when I reach 90 days of sobriety.

Weekend away to a special place after reaching 1 year sobriety.

Emergency plan in case of a crash

I will call my counsellor and/or another leader to confess my sin as soon as possible and within 12 hours.

I will confess crash to my wife after processing with counsellor.

I will attend next possible group meeting regardless of inconvenience and share it with my check-in group.

I will journal for at least 30 minutes about the stressors, triggers and fears preceding the crash.

I will re-evaluate both proactive and protective boundaries and share in writing any changes made with my counsellor, group members and my wife.

Revising This Document

I commit to reading over and revising this document on a once a month basis until I have a year of sobriety. After a year, I will read and revise on at least a quarterly basis.

If I lose my sobriety at any time in the future, I will return to a once a month basis.

Masturbation

The Controversy

The subject of masturbation is always difficult. First of all, the closest Scripture gets to a direct reference to masturbation is in **Genesis 38:9** where Onan "*spilled his semen on the ground.*" However, the text seems to imply the issue wasn't masturbation, but his refusal to have children bearing his brother's name. The question about masturbation is especially clouded because well-respected and even nationally known Christian counselors and teachers have said things like, "*there is nothing wrong with it unless it becomes excessive.*" However, the problem with "excessive" is it is a relative term and most men I've talked to believe it applies to those who do it more than they do.

The Reality

Understanding some of what happens in the brain at the point of sexual climax helps explain the connection. During arousal, the body releases **endorphins and enkephalins** that are two of the chemicals our brains desire most intensely. They are sometimes released during running or other high aerobic activities. Research shows the runner gets to a place where his body is in just enough pain it floods the brain with endorphins and enkephalins and creates an opiate-type chemical and a "buzz". The result is the brain wants to do it again and again. The body also releases these chemicals through creativity, expression, as well as intimate connections with others.

Orgasm releases an especially high volume of endorphins and enkephalins. Over time, habitual masturbation develops neurological pathways causing the brain to literally become "chemically addicted. That is why most men experience physical withdrawal symptoms like nervousness, headaches, fatigue, irritability etc. as they "kick the habit."

It is also important to note sexual release stimulates the brain's pleasure center which is the same place stimulated by **cocaine and heroin**.

Jim Wilder points out the portion of our brain controlling our genitals is immediately adjacent to the brain's bonding center. Therefore, the purpose of our sexuality is to "synchronize" energy states, emotions etc. with another person who is "glad to be with us."

"The problem with masturbation ... is that it is synchronizing energy with nobody." This leads a man to bond with himself, his fantasy or other non-relational entities, which in turn leads a man to further isolation and compulsion.

Patrick Carnes illustrates this well:

When a person goes to a strip club, views a porn movie in a theater, or takes part in some other kind of voyeuristic or exposing activity, it's usually not possible to have an orgasm at the moment that the activity is taking place.

People generally re-turn to a car or their home and masturbate to the memory of the event. One of the attributes of the Internet that makes it powerful is it is possible to have an orgasm while watching a stripper or "spying" on via a voyeur cam in the safety of your own surroundings. The sexual activity and orgasm suddenly become linked. In addition, the computer and its location become sexualized too. Going to the computer, turning it on, logging on to the Net, taking part in online sexual activities, and orgasm all become fused into a very powerful ritualized activity.

Fetishes

Doug Weiss tells the story of a client who could only masturbate with his cowboy boots on. When they explored his story, they found he discovered masturbation while living in an old farmhouse. His family heard him and made fun of him. His solution was to put his boots on, go outside and masturbate while looking down at his feet. Through this repetitive orgasm centered sexual activity, he became sexually bonded to his boots. This process is often the source of fetishes that seem strange to everyone except those bonded to the objects.

It's Impact on Our Relationships

God created our brains so sexual release would be an important part of the bonding process with our spouse. In **Ephesians 5 :31**, Paul writes, *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."* "Unite" comes from the Greek word Kallao which literally means *"to glue together."*, God designed sexual union between man and wife to be **"super-glue"** that bonds one flesh to the other. Satan, however, has twisted God's good by introducing other objects, people and even fantasy into this intimate experience. The result is we bond to whatever we are looking at or involved with at the point of climax.

Masturbation also feeds our fear of intimacy and relationship. Bumper stickers say: "Porn... it's cheaper than dating." Some men are single because through pornography and masturbation they have learned they can have false intimacy without risking relationships. Many married men live relationally isolated in part because their addiction to "solo-sex" has isolated them even from the one they promised to "love, honour and cherish."

For me, the real evil of masturbation would be that it takes an appetite which, in lawful use, leads the individual out of himself to complete his own personality in that of another and turns it back; sends the man into the prison of himself, there to keep a harem of imaginary brides.

And this harem, once admitted, works against his ever getting out and really uniting with a real woman. For the harem is: always accessible, always subservient, calls for no sacrifices or adjustments, and can be endowed with erotic and psychological attractions which no real woman can rival.

Among those shadowy brides he is: always adored, always the perfect love, no demand is made on his unselfishness, no mortification ever imposed on his vanity. In the end, they become merely the medium through which he increasingly adores himself.

Its impact on our sex life with our spouse

Another problem with masturbation is it conditions the body for quick release and the mind for a narcissistic focus on self. When a man masturbates he generally does so quickly because of a fear of "being caught" and because his goal is the release of the endorphins and the enkephalins on the pleasure center of the brain. Since he is the only one he seeks to please, he learns to go through the arousal and climax process quickly. Once he marries and has intercourse with his wife, he may find it impossible to hold off orgasm long enough to satisfy his wife. Some men are so self focused the briefness of the encounter does not bother them. They get their needs met and that is all that matters. Other men struggle with feelings of shame and/or inadequacy because of their inability to please their spouse. Either way, the end result is often the same. An event God designed to bring pleasure and connection between a husband a wife ends, not in a place of joy, but a place of failure, shame and isolation.

Once a man conditions his body this way, he may continue to struggle with control even after he has broken the masturbation habit. Fortunately, there are exercises to help a man learn to maintain control but they are beyond the scope of this manual. I must, however, give one important note of caution. These exercises require regular and active participation by your wife and are inherently sexual in nature. Very, very few couples in early recovery are in a place where they can navigate the extremely tumultuous waters of this activity. (Not to mention the fact that reading a book about sex, even God honoring marital sex, can be a trigger for many men.) It should be saved for sometime after both husband and wife have been in recovery for at least a year.

The Joy of Freedom

In the next chapter we will cover very practical and specific guidelines to help you abstain from masturbation. For now, I'll close with "Jim's" story as a way of encouragement and preparation for the next chapter. Jim's battle and victory provide a vivid illustration of how masturbation and the battle of abstaining from it play out in "real life."

About a year into my recovery, my wife and I decided to do a total abstinence period to give her some time to heal and not feel any pressure from me about sex. I had no idea how important this time would be for me or how tied I really was to the belief that sex was my greatest need and that I would die if I did not have regular sexual release.

The first ten days or so were actually pretty easy. After all, because of my wife's menstrual cycle, travel, house-guests and other "complications" we had gone that long on numerous occasions. However, starting about the second week, literally all hell began to break loose. I woke up at 3am from a dream where I was in my old office watching a slide show of images I had downloaded to my computer. I was so aroused I was ready to release and afraid any movement or pressure would do me in. Everything within me screamed *"just get it over with. You know you are too far gone to not finish what you have started."*

The condemnation poured in like a flood. *"You know you want to do it. You'll never break free because this is just who you are."* And the worst was an almost audible voice saying, *"I didn't use anything new, I only used what you had placed in your mental hard drive."* The last one almost did me in because I started thinking about the pictures in my dream, and I could vividly remember downloading and masturbating to them about two years earlier. Thankfully, however, I had just enough sense to cry out to God. No, the erection did not suddenly subside and no, victory wasn't immediate. However, over the next hour or so, as I laid in bed praying and begging God for the strength to not act out, the crisis passed and God delivered me.

The very next night was an almost exact repetition of the night before only in addition to the condemnation; Satan added messages of deception and justification.

"No one will know: your wife is sound asleep and you don't have to tell anyone. It isn't like you are having an affair or something. If she were meeting your needs like scripture says she should, you wouldn't be in this place. Everyone knows 99% of men do it and the other one percent lie about it. You barely survived last night, how are you going to survive this night after night after night?"

And finally, *"This will go on forever."*

The last message, however, is where Satan tipped his hand. I knew it wouldn't go on forever because my wife and I had agreed to a thirty day "sexual fast," not to a life of celibacy. Thankfully, that awareness, combined with God's gracious comfort, got me through another night.

A few nights later, I woke up soaked as I had experienced my first "wet dream

Since I started masturbating around the age of 11, I had never gone long enough without a sexual release to require my body to "take care of itself." Looking back, I now realize it really was a landmark of victory: however, at the moment all I could feel was shame. I felt dirty. I felt like I had just crashed and Satan flooded me with his messages of condemnation. On top of everything, I had to clean up.

I vividly remember crying as I tried to go back to sleep, "*God, is this pain ever going to go away.*" The next day, however, I was able to talk and pray through the night's events. God showed me I am not responsible for my dreams. I hadn't crashed. I wasn't starting over, and for a while things got better.

The next several nights were "uneventful," and I started to think I had survived the assault. In fact, while going to sleep each night was still a struggle and I desperately wanted to "renegotiate" with my wife, I was able to go to sleep without acting out. Several mornings, I remember waking up almost "giddy" and honestly surprised not only that I hadn't died but at how good I felt. You aren't supposed to feel this way when you "aren't getting any," but I did, and the freedom felt incredible.

About a week later, the attacks returned. I had several more sexually explicit dreams and always woke up just before the point of release. It was difficult and felt much like the first week, only slightly easier. I knew I didn't have to give in and knew if I "*stood in the middle of the pain long enough, God would show Himself to be enough.*"

After about a month of abstinence, I felt pretty good about myself and, at the same time, incredibly aroused by even looking at or thinking about my wife. That is when the physical pain kicked in. My lower back began to ache and my testicles started throbbing. Honestly, it felt like they were going to explode. They were so full and hard it hurt when I walked. On top of that, I had intense and even painful erections that would last for hours and not go away no matter what I did. Thoughts raced through my head:

"The only solution to this problem is to either have sex with my wife or else take matters into my own hands."

I may have even asked her to end the fast early and put me out of my misery. Thankfully, she didn't because it was only by surviving the "misery" that I learned sex did not have to control me.

To make matters even worse, a day before we had planned on resuming physical intimacy, my wife told me she wasn't ready to end the fast. I must admit, I was hurt, angry and felt both cheated and punished. Thoughts like, "*Does she have no clue how hard this is for me?*" and "*Wait one second, we had a deal. You owe me!*" rattled through my brain. I don't remember how much I protested, but what choice did I have?

I could have possibly pressured her into caving in-and looking back at where I was at the time - I probably tried. However, we weren't intimate for at least three more weeks and that was a tremendous blessing for me. No, at the time, it didn't feel like a blessing. However, especially since we didn't have an official "ending point" as it was my wife's nebulous, "*When I'm ready, I'll let you know,*" I learned that even without sex, I could be Okay.

Yes, I was frustrated. Yes, I was hurting, but I was alive, and I could even function during my day. I experienced a level of freedom I never knew existed. Today, several years later, I still long to be intimate with my wife, however, during the times (because of her struggles, travel or other circumstances,) where we aren't physically intimate, I know I will be okay. While they are still difficult, they pale in comparison because I now know I will not die. I also know my desire for sexual intimacy is a healthy desire and no longer a compulsive need. I pray you find the same freedom!

Application & Journaling Questions

1. When and how did you discover masturbation?
2. In a typical week, how often did you masturbate at the following ages?
 - 8-10 ____.
 - 11-13 ____.
 - 14-16 ____.
 - 17-19 ____.
 - College ____.
3. How quickly into your marriage did masturbation resurface?
4. What is your current frequency of masturbation?
5. How have your patterns of masturbation changed since marrying?
6. When do you feel the pull to masturbate? What triggers are you currently aware of?
7. Is your wife aware of your masturbation habit? What have you done to "hide" it from her?
8. What does your need to "hide" it from her say about its legitimacy?
9. What mixed messages have you received concerning masturbation?
10. How have you "justified" masturbation to yourself? To your wife?
11. Do you feel convicted to abstain from masturbation? If "yes," for how long? If "no," will you consider a 90-day fast from masturbation to see what kind of hold it has on you?
12. Take 15 minutes to simply journal about any connections you see between your story and "Jim's" story. Don't edit your thoughts; just write in your journal whatever comes to your mind.

Abstaining From Masturbation, Preparing for the Battle

This chapter presents several very practical truths that will help you in your battle. Please read them carefully. Then, as always, spend ample time answering the questions. Answering the questions will help you apply truth to your own struggle and to continue working on the right side of your brain through attunement. I cannot overstate how important it is to understand the intensity of the battle before you and the necessity of taking appropriate steps to be prepared for it. Without this understanding, the most common reaction is to be overwhelmed when the intensity of struggle barges into your life and to then sink into despair and acting out. Being aware of the battle may not make the battle itself easier, but when it comes (and it will), you will have already made the decision to stand and face the battle "come what may" and you will be prepared with the necessary weapons to fight well and victoriously.

Truth #1: You Will Not Die

While this may seem a little dramatic, the first and most important thing you must understand when walking out of an addiction to masturbation is you will not die. In fact, you won't even explode or go crazy. (Well, you might go crazy, but it won't be from not having a sexual release.) Part of learning to not masturbate is actually a **childhood task of learning how to tame your cravings**. In an ideal maturation process a boy will learn to overcome the voice inside his head that says he will die if he doesn't get whatever he craves at a given moment. This process is actually a physical skill of taming a small portion of the brain called the nucleus accumbens.²

Addicts have notoriously poor impulse control because they have never learned to tame **"this small cluster of nerves in their brain that screams loudly 'we are surely going to die' if we do not get what we crave. Learning to tame the nucleus means learning to delay gratification, resist our appetites and withstand our drives. Disciplines like fasting and moderation in our eating and pleasures teach us to tame the nucleus accumbens.'** When a two year old lies on the floor and pitches a fit because he can't have ice cream right before dinner, he demonstrates he does not have control over his nucleus accumbens.

When a 40-year-old man gives in and masturbates after three days of abstinence, part of what he is dealing with is an untrained nucleus accumbens.

It is a learned skill but the only way to learn it, is to do it. I.e. you cannot tame your nucleus accumbens by reading about it. You have to do without and struggle through the lies.

² Please see *"Book 1: Growing Up And The Brain"*, available from Kanaan Ministries.

Many men, consciously or at least sub-consciously believe if they don't have a sexual release every X number of days, they will die. If they believe that number is two, the only way they will learn on a heart level it is a lie, is by going more than two days. If they believe that number is 30 days, the only way to diffuse the lie is by going past 30 days.

It is fairly common for men to get trapped in specific cycles. We have had a number of men do well for about 30 days and then crash, 30 more days and then crash again. There are many factors involved, but the cycle is often the same. Immediately after a crash, the pain of their actions is enough that they are highly motivated. They make phone calls, attend group meetings, read materials, spend time journaling, praying etc. After a few weeks - as the memory of the pain fades - they slack off on "recovery behaviors" and before they recognize the cycle, cave in to their nucleus accumbens as it cries out, "*if you don't relieve yourself, you are going to die.*" Sometimes men avoid facing the pain of their cravings by prodding or pressuring their wife into sex, not for the purpose of connection, but simply for a release so they don't have to face the pain of the unfilled craving. The reality, however, is **you can only find true freedom by fighting through the pain, you cannot go around it.**

"You must stand in the middle of the pain long enough to discover God is truly enough."

Truth #2: You Will Suffer Physical Symptoms

In addition to the pain of taming the nucleus accumbens, most men also suffer physically as their body adjusts to not masturbating. If a man masturbates or has a sexual release daily, his body conditions itself to produce enough semen for daily ejaculations. When a man goes from a daily release (or multiple daily releases) to a less frequent pattern, (i.e. when his only outlet is intercourse with his wife), his body continues to produce the amount of semen he has conditioned it to produce. The result is literally like building a dam on a streambed. The fluid backs up and begins to apply pressure in all the wrong places.

While it is uncomfortable to talk about, we always see relief on the faces of new men in the groups when someone further down the road talks about feeling like his "testicles were going to explode." In addition to the testicular pain, many men also experience lower back pain due to pressure on the prostate. While it is uncomfortable, the good news is, over time, your body will learn to adjust to your "normal" frequency of sexual intimacy, even if your normal is total abstinence. However, some of these symptoms may return when you do not have a sexual release for a period of time. The fact that the symptoms return, however, does not give credence to the lie that a man must have a regular sexual release. **Part of growing in our maturity is learning to suffer well.**

In **Ephesians 5:25** Paul writes, "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*" The price Jesus paid to give Himself up for His Bride included more than a little suffering. It was, and is, a mark of His love for her. During the times your wife is unable to meet your needs, God calls you to suffer well for her sake. It can be painful. However, in order to grow into true manhood, you must learn how not to be controlled by pain. You must learn to endure suffering – even the physical pain that comes from not having a sexual release – in a way that brings Glory to Christ. Don't deny it. Don't pretend it doesn't hurt, and by all means, don't try to deal with it alone. As uncomfortable as it may seem at first, you will find great encouragement and support when you talk about it in your recovery group. In addition to group times, pick up the phone, call someone and talk through the pain. If they are ahead of you in recovery, most likely they will know exactly what you are talking about and can offer you words of hope because they are also striving to learn to suffer well.

Truth #3: You Will Suffer Chemical Withdrawals

Many ask how sex can be an addiction when no drug is ingested. Drugs, in fact are involved - in the form of naturally occurring peptides such as endorphins, which govern the electrochemical interactions within the brain. These peptides parallel the molecular construction of opiates like morphine, but they are many times more powerful.

Therefore, since the release of **endorphins and enkephalins** in the pleasure center of your brain is a chemical reaction, the constant repetitive nature of masturbation literally creates a **chemical dependency**. In fact, a study found many who wrestled with both a chemical addiction and a sex addiction said the **withdrawal symptoms from the sexual addiction were the most difficult to endure**. While the initial physical symptoms were less severe, the overall withdrawal experience took longer and hurt more than withdrawals from the chemical addiction.

One man on an Oprah Winfrey show put it in graphic terms when he said, "I have been through withdrawals from alcohol, cocaine, and nicotine and none of them compared to withdrawals from sexual addiction."

The withdrawal symptoms include a variety of experiences including, but not limited to the following: Headaches, irritability, fits of anger, fatigue, inability to sleep, sleeping too much, loss of appetite, increased appetite, nausea, heart rate increases, shortness of breath, heightened sexual desire, decreased or even no sexual desire, chills, sweats, and some even experience body shakes similar to those experienced by alcoholics and drug addicts. Like all withdrawal symptoms, there is no way around them; they must simply be endured until they fade away.

Truth #4: You Will Be Attacked By The Enemy

Satan hates freedom and any movement you make to walk out of the bondage will meet stiff resistance - Satan is actively involvement in our lives and world. Below are a couple stories to help you catch a glimpse of the spiritual assault.

Example 1:

"Jeff" was about 50 days into recovery when he and his wife went to see family for a holiday. On their way home, they stopped at a rest stop and each went to the appropriate restroom. On Jeff's way out, a prostitute met him face to face and solicited him on the spot. Prior to that moment, he had never been that close to a prostitute, let alone solicited by one. Now, when he is at a watershed stage in his recovery, she stands in front of him and basically offers to go back into the restroom with him to "meet his needs." He was caught completely off guard. By the grace of God, however, he had his cell phone in hand and made a call with her standing right in front of him. A moment later, his wife walked out, saw him standing with a prostitute and it was only God's mercy that allowed her to see he was making a phone call and not engaging the woman. That encounter, however, haunted him for many days and Satan continued to heap messages of condemnation as well as the temptation to masturbate to the memory of what "could have been." Thankfully, Jeff continued to talk through the event, the messages of condemnation and the temptation with group members and at group meetings until its power faded.

Example 2:

Peter occasionally acted out by going to a strip club about an hour away from his hometown. His job had high visibility in the community and he was a leader in his church so he was always terrified of being caught. On his last visit to the strip club, he had a conversation with one of the workers. Ironically enough, the conversation turned to spiritual things and Peter felt convicted about his sin while at the same time drawn to encourage the young woman to seek out her faith.

When he got home, he purchased and sent an outreach book to her explaining the gospel in very simple terms. He mailed it to the club with her name on it. He has no memory of writing anything more than something like "I pray this will help you in your journey to know God" and cannot believe he would have been stupid enough to leave his phone number or anything that could be traced back to him. He even said that if he had done anything, he would have put an untraceable email address he sometimes used. Three months later he was making some very significant strides in his recovery, including his longest period ever without masturbating and getting ready to move out of his shame by telling a few key people in his life about his struggle.

It was at this point the attacks came in full force. First, he had a dream where the young woman from the club was calling his name and asking for him. The very next day, while he was encouraging someone else in his addiction, he received a text message on his cell phone asking, "What do you do for a living?" This was especially surprising because he didn't do text messages. Here is his account of what happened:

When I saw that it was from the same area code as the strip club, I caught my breath. Somehow I just knew they were connected. A couple of minutes later, I received another message: "Well, you gonna answer, or do I have to point you out?" I text back: "Who is this?"

A couple of minutes later: "Answer the question" Still not sure if this was serious or not, I answered, "I'm a secret agent. " The reply: "This ain't no game. You in my business, and you shouldn't be."

I still didn't want to admit anything, so I text back, "How have I offended you?" Reply: "You meet a girl from a shake joint a while back?" Again, I responded, "How have I made you angry?"

The response: "So you go from [your town] to [my town] so no one will know?" Now, I had told a few people, so I texted back two words: "People know." After this, there was at least an excruciating hour before I heard anything, then I received... "What was the name of the book you sent her? " I responded: "What is the purpose of these questions?"

And that was the last I heard from the text messenger. I tried to call the number, but didn't get an answer. Needless to say, the whole event freaked me out. It was three months after my initial encounter at the club, during a week when my life's ministry and recovery were both starting to hit a consistent stride. I seriously feared that everything was about to come crashing in around me. By the grace and mercy of God, however, He turned it into an opportunity to reach out to my counsellor, and the guys in my group.

Therefore, as you make progress in your recovery and especially as you gain important territory you must realize Satan will step up his attacks on you. While you cannot anticipate the specifics of his attacks - he is a master at ambushing his victims - you must prepare yourself for whatever he throws at you.

The good news, however, is God's protection is more powerful than Satan's attack. John tells us "*the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world*" (I John 4:4). Satan attacks primarily by deception. He is never stronger or more powerful than our God who he opposes. He will constantly attempt to convince you otherwise. He will threaten you with his power that is infinitely stronger than your power outside of Christ but powerless at the Name of Jesus. He also can never resist an opportunity to take a big swing at you. But don't miss this important truth: Whenever Satan throws his biggest punches, he leaves himself most vulnerable to God's counter-punches.

Whenever you are under attack, look for the opportunity that God wants to step into. Look for Him to reveal Satan's lies in your life and to bring healing to the wounded places. Satan always attacks your vulnerabilities and his attacks can be a great diagnostic for the very places God wants to heal. Even if his punch lands - even if you crash - don't give up hope. Instead, trust our God is a redeeming God and "*know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose*" (**Romans 8:28**). The "all things" of that verse even includes your sin. Some of the greatest victories our men have found in their recovery work have come immediately after being pummeled by Satan's attacks and even in the aftermath of some of their worst crashes. Our God is much greater than our enemy and our victory is assured by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Truth #5: You Will Experience Sexually Explicit Dreams

One common way Satan attacks men in early recovery is through their dreams. I do not know a single man who has broken free from a sexual addiction that Satan did not attack this way. I have had a few men claim they weren't having any dreams, but it later came out they weren't being honest with the group or me and were still acting out. The dreams seem to follow a fairly typical pattern.

Within a month from the time a man stops masturbating (assuming he isn't using intercourse with his wife for the same purpose and frequency - see #6 below) he will usually wake up in the middle of the night from a sexually charged dream. Often the dream will be about women he has seen in his pornography, fantasized about in real time or acted out with in some manner. He will wake up right before the point of climax and everything within him will scream to "finish the job." Satan then heaps messages of condemnation and hopelessness like, "This is what you really want" and, "You'll never get out of this."

At this point, it is absolutely crucial you learn to fight well.

- First, you must pray. This is a satanically charged attack against your recovery and the only way you will have the strength to overcome is by asking God to intervene.
- Second, you must not touch yourself as it may only take the slightest touch to push you over the edge.

- Third, you need to do whatever is necessary to diffuse the sexual energy. Some have found it helpful to get out of bed, go into another room and read, journal, pray or do something that takes your mind off the images and sensations of the dream. For some, leaving the bed is too dangerous because they won't act out with their wife in bed with them but will if they go into another room. (Again, it is helpful to have a battle plan ahead of time rather than making decisions in the heat of the moment.)
- Fourth, you must talk about the dream with someone as soon as possible. There are times this can be your wife, however, please be very careful and make absolutely certain she is in a place to help you and not in a place where she will feel condemned or pressured to use her sexuality to make you Okay. If you talk to her, don't burden her with the details; just say something to the effect of *"I've just had a sexually explicit attack dream, would you please pray with me."*

You definitely need to talk about it with a counsellor or group member as soon as possible. If you do not talk about it, the images and sensations will continue to pop into your mind for days to come and will, at the very least, cause unnecessary struggle and most likely lead to a slip or a crash. Obviously, when you talk about your sexually explicit dreams, you need to be careful to not trigger the person you are talking to by giving unnecessary details. Talking about your dreams doesn't require the details as much as it requires you to talk about the feelings, pulls etc. that come as a result of the dreams. Finally, you must remember you are not responsible for your dreams no matter what Satan throws at you. Yes, sometimes a dream is a consequence of our sexual acting out in the past; sometimes it is even a re-enactment of previous sin.

However, if that past has been confessed and washed in the Blood of Jesus Christ, there is no condemnation for it. Satan knows that, but he is the master of manipulation and deception. He doesn't care if there is any real condemnation, he only cares that you feel condemned. It is also helpful to pray specifically about the dreams before going to sleep. One prayer many men have found especially helpful is the prayer:

Lord, please protect me from any sexually explicit attack dreams tonight by showing me the way of escape. If Satan attacks this way, please empower me to fight with your weapons and not my own. Please wake me up enough that I can fight by faith rather than swinging wildly in the fog of being half asleep and half awake. Please remind me in the moment of waking that you have promised a way out.

Remember, scripture tells us: *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it"* (I Corinthians 10: 13).

While it seems strange to us that God would allow Satan to attack a man coming out of a sexual addiction with sexually explicit dreams, we can know God will not allow more than a man can bear, and He will provide an escape. We can also know when a man chooses God's escape, he will discover more about himself and about God's power to protect and deliver.

Truth #6: You Must Avoid All Inappropriate Touch

It is not uncommon for men to define masturbation in the strictest sense of masturbating to the point of climax and not consider it a problem if they stop themselves before reaching a climax. While it is certainly better to stop than to finish, starting the process invariably causes problems. An acquaintance of mine is a polygraph examiner who does tests on sexual offenders as part of their "continued therapy and monitoring." He brought home the importance of this point the day he told me a common practice among pedophiles is to masturbate to the point just before climax and then stop. This leaves them in a heightened sexual place that helps lower their inhibitions enough to go ahead and find or move forward with a victim. Needless to say, that got my attention, as I had not made enough out of the issue of "inappropriate touching." Some might protest, *"If the flood of endorphins and enkephalins comes at the point of orgasm, what does a little stimulation hurt?"* Well, the reality is all sexual fantasy, touching etc. releases those same chemicals. Orgasm releases a greater quantity, but the other activities stimulate the same processes in the brain. It is also a deceptive and slippery slope of determining how much touch is too much. The best approach is to limit touch to the functional necessities.

Truth #7: You Must Avoid Using Your Wife Addictively

You should never use your wife addictively. No, I am not saying making love to your wife is a form of acting out. It is a gift from God. However, in early recovery, especially while fighting withdrawal symptoms, it is very difficult to know whether you want to "make love" or whether you just "need a release." One man put it quite bluntly when he said, *"I realized I was just masturbating in my wife's vagina."* God intended sex to be an intimate form of communication where husband and wife share their joy of being together. In fact, I believe the most important message a man can communicate to his wife during physical intimacies is the message, *"I am as glad as glad can be to be with you."* When sex is need-driven, it isn't about sharing joy but about getting a fix. The problem for a man in early recovery is those messages are so mixed up in his own mind, they are very difficult for him to understand himself, let alone communicate to his wife.

Sex with your wife in early recovery can also create a problem because it triggers the same chemical processes as acting out. The difference, however, is there is at least the possibility of a connection with your wife.

This potential goes unfulfilled, however, whenever a man disappears into his fantasy world. Most men who use pornography struggle, (even months into recovery,) with replaying slide shows, movies and encounters with other women on the video screen of their minds during physical intimacy.

When a man uses fantasy while being sexual with his wife, it is especially damaging because it leaves him disconnected from her and continues to bond him to whatever he is visualizing. Because of these factors, we recommend every man who struggles with sexual addiction go through a 90-day total abstinence period at some point in his recovery. We've noted for a long time that a man who comes to us either single or else whose wife is so hurt that sex is not on the radar screen, usually breaks through the physical aspects of the addiction quicker and more thoroughly than the man who continues being intimate with his wife. When you look at it from the chemical addiction standpoint, the reasons are obvious.

The problem, however, is the struggle for freedom is about much more than breaking the chemical addiction. For all addicts, healing is also about having needs for love, acceptance, touch and other early childhood or even infant level needs met by others around them. When a wife is able to give herself to her husband in vulnerable sexuality, it is a powerful form of care that meets some of those needs.

However, it is also an incredibly dangerous form as the addict has often **sexualized most or all of his needs**. "*Addiction is a way of meeting legitimate needs in illegitimate ways.*" He needs touch – he demands sex. He needs unconditional acceptance - he sees sex as the only way she can show true acceptance. The sexualizing of needs may also feed the addict's desire to have his wife be the one who meets all of his needs. The reality, however, is **no single individual can make up for the missing affections of early childhood**; the needs are simply too great. The pressure to meet these needs through sex is especially painful for a woman who understands even partially how deeply his sexual sins have wounded her.

On the other side of the coin is the reality that when a wife is unable or unwilling to sexually give herself to her husband, Satan invariably uses that as a club to continue to pound home the message the husband is not "loveable." Therefore, the timing of the abstinence period is something each couple must determine by God's leading.

In **I Corinthians 7:5** Paul writes: "*Do not deprive each other [sexually] except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self control.*"

We are not wise enough to know when the right time is for an abstinence period. Our souls are too complicated for formulas or human wisdom.

However, God knows what we need, and if we will trust Him to lead us, He will tell us when the time is right. However, if your wife is so hurt by your acting out or by the pressure you have put on her to make you Okay through sex that she cannot be sexual with you, then you need to accept where she is as God's answer. You also need to accept the possibility that it may be much longer than even the 90-days we have suggested because wounds this deep do not heal on a pre-determined time table.

Truth #8: You Must Lock Arms With Your Brothers in Battle

Hopefully by now you have recognized the steady drumbeat pounding out the need for community.

Even in this chapter, the beat goes on; you must lock arms with your brothers in battle. Lone rangers quickly become combat casualties. Just as one soldier cannot defend the attack of an entire platoon of the enemy, you cannot fight this battle alone. One of the most difficult and yet most liberating skills men must learn is how to connect with other men, especially those in his recovery group. The men who learn to make daily phone calls, meet with one another outside of group and truly open up in meetings eventually find freedom. The men who make excuses like, "*I'm just not much for talking on the phone*" or, "*I don't want to bother anyone,*" rarely break free from the cycle of addiction. Neither do those who fail to make the adjustments necessary to make group meetings a priority, or who, when they come to groups, fail to talk openly and honestly about the temptations and struggles they face on a daily basis.

Some may stop acting out sexually, but they generally just swap addictions. They may not masturbate, but they eat, work, play or do something else just as addictively. They also stay disconnected from their wife, their children and others. One of the failed tasks of maturity that left us open to addiction in the first place is the failure to establish a group identity. Connecting with a group of fellow strugglers is often the first place where many men discover true fellowship, acceptance and connection with others. Learning to relate to and connect with others is a skill our community, i.e, family, church, schools and etc, should have helped us learn in childhood. However, most of us lived in some form of shame that kept us isolated, believing there was something inherently wrong with us. Walking in the light with our brothers in Christ and locking arms with them in battle creates an immediate and powerful sense of community that begins the repair work necessary to take the next steps of maturity.

Walking out of a sexual addiction is one of the most difficult and yet rewarding things you will do in this lifetime. It is our hope and prayer the truths in this chapter will help you in this incredibly difficult but critical battle.

Application & Journaling Questions

The questions below refer to "Truth # 1: You Will Not Die."

1. Outside of your struggle with sex, where else can you see evidence that you have not tamed the craving center of your brain? Describe at least three areas where you have poor impulse control or cave into the message, "*you will die if you don't ...*"
2. How long without a sexual release does it take before you start to feel a compulsive need for a release?
3. Describe how you see that compulsion manifest itself in your behavior, thoughts and attitudes?
4. Looking back on your crashes, can you identify any specific frequency patterns? I.e. do you (or did you) crash every week? every two weeks? once a month?
5. What is the longest you have gone without a sexual release?
6. How does the saying: "*You must stand in the middle of the pain long enough to discover God is truly enough*" strike you? How and when do you see it applying to your recovery?

The questions below refer to "Truth #2: You Will Suffer Physical Symptoms"

1. Describe how your body responds to the pressure build up from abstaining from masturbation.
2. How have you, or how would you respond if you were in a group meeting and someone started a discussion by saying, "*I remember when I first started recovery, I thought my testicles were going to explode?*"
3. What does the idea of "*learning to suffer well*" conjure up for you?
4. What is your current frequency of sexual intimacy with your wife? How do you want to respond if she needs a break from sex for her own healing? If she has asked for a break, how have you responded?
5. List the men you are going to call or talk to when the physical symptoms start to "apply pressure in all the wrong places."

The questions below refer to "Truth #3: You Will Suffer Chemical Withdrawals"

1. What light does the comparison of the chemicals released in sexual activity to drugs like morphine, heroine and cocaine shed on your struggle with sex?

2. What does the quote from the man on the Oprah Winfrey show say to you about the level of determination, work and commitment you will need to really do recovery?
3. Using the list in the last paragraph of the text, what physical symptoms have you already experienced?

The questions below refer to 'Truth #4: You Will Be Attacked by The Enemy'

1. What have you done to attempt to "go around" the symptoms rather than going through the pain?
2. How have those attempts worked for you?
3. What was been your view of Satan's involvement in your life before starting recovery?
4. How is your understanding of his attacks changing as you pursue recovery?
5. What strange "circumstances" have you already faced in your battle for freedom in the sexual arena? Do you see them as attacks or simply part of life?
6. What personal fears do you believe Satan will (or has) attempt to capitalize on in his attacks on you?
7. Satan often attacks us by attacking those close to us or convincing them things are not true about us? Have you experienced this? If yes, please describe.
8. One of the greatest fears for many men in recovery is that they will be exposed. Take a moment and imagine what it would really be like if your sins were broadcast on the local news. What would really happen if everyone knew the worst about you?
9. How could God use your "exposure" for redemptive purposes?
10. If you were "exposed," what would that do to Satan's leverage of "the fear of exposure?"
11. What does I John 4:4 say to you personally about Satan's attacks?

The questions below refer to "Truth #5: You Will Experience Sexually Explicit Dreams"

1. Have you experienced a "sexual attack" dream? If yes, what fears, feelings and emotions did you experience?
2. What messages of condemnation did you hear?
3. What messages of deception did you hear?
4. How did you handle the dream and the subsequent effects?

5. What is your plan for the next time you have a sexually explicit or implicit dream?
6. What does, "*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man*" say about your fellow group members in regards to the dreams?
7. What does "*God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear*" tell you about the intensity of the dream and the subsequent effects?
8. What does, "*But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it*" say about the feelings of inevitability that so often accompany this kind of an attack?

The questions below refer to "Truth #6: You Must Avoid All Inappropriate Touch"

1. How do you define masturbation?
2. How has "inappropriate touching" been part of your struggle?
3. Who do you need to talk to about this issue?

The questions below refer to "Truth #7: You Must Avoid Using Your Wife Addictively"

1. Describe the difference between "making love" and "having sex." How have you experienced the difference in your own marriage?
2. How does the goal of demonstrating relational joy to and with your wife differ from your previous goals for sexual intimacy?
3. Have you slipped into fantasy while being sexually intimate with your wife? If yes, what are you doing to bring that into the light?

(Speaking of light, one thing that is helpful is to always have a light on in the room and to focus on eye contact and loving conversation with your wife. Staying connected to her will prevent you from going to fantasy as you can't connect and fantasize at the same time.)

4. What does a 90-day total abstinence period sound like to you? (It is OK to be honest as it sounds like death to many men.)
5. How have you "sexualized" some of your basic needs?
6. How does the quote "*Addiction is a way of meeting legitimate needs in illegitimate ways*" apply to your story?
7. How and when have you asked your wife to make you OK through sex?
8. When your wife says "No" or when you aren't sexually intimate for a period of time, what messages does Satan hammer you with?

9. Where is your wife in regards to her need for an abstinence period? Are you willing for her to read this and then to discuss it with you? If yes, when will you ask her to read it?

The questions below refer to "Truth #8: You Must Lock Arms With Your Brothers in Battle"

1. What men in your life have you really opened yourself up to? I.e. who knows your true fears, struggles and maybe even more importantly, your true glory?
2. How has your struggle with sexual issues isolated you from relationships with other men?
3. What excuses do you make for not making phone calls? After each excuse write the truth that counters the excuse.
4. What adjustments do you still need to make in order make group meetings and connecting with other men in the group the priority it needs to be?

Final Question

You can't work on everything at once so pray and ask God what specific things He wants you to focus on where you are right now in your recovery. In your journal, list whatever comes to your mind and ask Him for clarity about what to do with the list.

Telling your wife about
your struggle

"Coming Clean" With Your Spouse

One of the most difficult things to do in early recovery is to "come clean" to your spouse. We believe in order to remove shame and allow the opportunity for true forgiveness and healing in the marriage the husband must come clean about both the breadth and depth of his activities. Even men whose wives caught them with pornography on the computer, discovered their affair or found other evidence still face the task of coming completely clean. Sometimes, even those who have been in recovery for a significant period of time need to go back and have a "full disclosure" meeting to confess things they have hidden.



A common excuse for avoiding full disclosure is the belief that telling everything will only hurt her more. However, the reality is he doesn't hurt her when he tells her what he has done; **he hurts her when he sins sexually against her**. An addicted man's desire to protect his wife from pain is almost always rooted in the self protection of knowing the more she knows the more painful it will be for him. The guise of "not hurting her" is usually a thinly veiled smoke screen for not wanting to face the consequences of his actions. Unfortunately, men are often advised by well meaning pastors, counselors and friends to either not tell or else not tell everything. **Our experience, however, has shown full recovery for both husband and wife requires everything to be in the light. The earlier this happens, the better it is for both individuals and for the marriage.**

"Death By A Thousand Cuts"

Another huge mistake men often make is to tell a little bit at a time. We call this "death by a thousand cuts." For example, in January he feels convicted and tells her he has been struggling with Internet pornography. In March, he feels even more conviction and admits he has been to a few strip clubs. A couple weeks later he confesses he had a "one night stand" while out of town on business.

Then, just about the time she regains her balance and starts the healing process, he feels horrible and admits the "one night stand" was actually a two year affair. As painful as it might sound, disclosure is best done like taking off a band-aid. Get as much of it done as possible the first time. With that said, it is also common for men who are honestly trying to give "full disclosure" to simply not remember some of their actions. When memories and conviction comes the best thing a husband can do is go back to his wife as soon as possible.

A Few Words of Caution

A few words of caution in regards to things that should not be shared: A wife needs to know the "breadth and depth" but she does not need to know all the specifics. She will have enough to forgive without the burden of unnecessary details like places you met, things you did, what the other woman was wearing, her hair color, chest size, perfume etc. It also isn't wise for a husband to describe the "type" of woman he is drawn to in pornography, strip clubs or fantasy, and **it is absolutely essential he never make any comparisons between his wife and his "dream girl."**

Respect Your Wife's Needs and Reactions

A husband must also give his wife the space she needs to process and the time she needs to make her own decisions about what she will do with his disclosure. Hopefully, she will be willing to go through the forgiveness and restoration process. However, even the most forgiving wife will need time and space to forgive and to heal. She will also need the support of safe people and must not be burdened with pressure to "keep the secret." No, it would not be helpful for her to go out and tell everyone, but that response would be an extreme exception. Most women will struggle to find the courage to tell anyone; so telling her you understand her need to seek support from safe people will remove one barrier from her temptation to live in isolation. The very best thing would be if she would join a support group for women whose husbands wrestle with pornography and other sexual issues.

You also need to be prepared for her reaction which may be anything from a response of, *"Okay, thanks for being honest"* to, *"Get out, I don't want to ever see you again."*

This is an extremely painful thing for wives to hear and they respond in very different ways. Some wives respond by going straight to denial while others go straight to rage. Most vacillate between the two extremes. The reality is they are deeply hurt in one of the core areas of a woman's heart. Your struggle most likely hits a place that was already battered even before you married her. Your confession will be a huge weight for her to process and even if she immediately offers you forgiveness, you must allow her to revisit the issue if and when her recovery requires more clarity. If at the time of disclosure, or even later when the reality of what you have done sets in, she asks you to leave the house or to sleep in another room, do not argue with her. The best thing you can do is give her the space she needs and come back the next day to set up another time to talk.

Remember, **your sexual sin violated your marriage vows**. You have no rights here anymore. Yes, for her part, she must choose to either forgive you or continue to live out of her own hurt and bitterness. For her sake, we pray she will choose the path of forgiveness. However, even if she chooses the path of forgiveness that does not automatically mean full reconciliation. She can forgive you for the sins you have committed against her and still not be able to move towards you. This is especially true for women whose husbands do not choose the path of deep healing and recovery. Ultimately, her decision to reconcile is between her and God. That is part of why I believe Jesus said, in cases of infidelity, divorce is an acceptable course of action. He understands how painful this relational betrayal can be. (Note: He says it is an option, not the best option.) If she chooses to forgive and reconcile, it will be out of God's mercy poured out to you through her. You cannot expect her to take this path and any effort to minimize, dismiss or shut down her pain will be counter-productive. Our experience is that most wives, once they finally know - and truly believe they know - the truth, choose to forgive and even reconcile. However, just because most do, does not mean your wife will or even should.

Words are Great But ...

Upon disclosure, many wives finally put the missing pieces together and become incredibly disturbed by the amount and the extent of the deceptions. They often respond with something like, "*You have lied to me for ten years now, how am I supposed to believe you are now telling me the truth and this is really all there is?*" At this point, you must acknowledge your past behavior gives her no reason to believe you in the present. All you can do is apologize and ask her to seek God's guidance.

The only thing that will prove to her you are serious about recovery is actually doing recovery.

Trust that has been broken requires a new history over a significant time to rebuild. However, one thing some of our couples have found helpful at this stage is for the husband to voluntarily take a **polygraph exam**.

While this sounds extreme, it can be incredibly helpful as it establishes "ground zero" on something more tangible than the addict's words. The looming polygraph often helps the addict come clean with everything and it helps the spouse because she sees her husband's willingness to both lay it all on the line and have that confirmed by an external measure.

It would also be wise for the husband to offer to meet with a marriage counselor or even better yet someone who counsels couples who wrestle with sexual addiction. If you already have a name and even an appointment scheduled, it will show her you are serious about your recovery and about restoring your marriage.

Finally, it would be best to take the initiative to plan your disclosure meeting. While it needs to be done as soon as logistically possible, it shouldn't be done at a time when the wife has some place she has to be, a major life event, etc. The best thing would be to tell her you need a time for the two of you to talk when there are no interruptions. It needs to be a time she can safely fall apart if that is where your confession takes her.

It is a terrifying thing to start being honest. However, you cannot lie your way through recovery. If you are hiding things from your wife, Satan will use that to keep you disconnected from her and from others that will most likely lead you back into the very behaviors from which you desperately want to be free.

Pre-Disclosure Meeting Worksheet

- During the time you have been married and/or dating your wife, list all sexual sins you have committed. **Be specific** as general confessions do not remove shame or create an environment for forgiveness.
- If you have had any involvement (sexual or emotional) with anyone other than your wife, have you severed all contact with that person? Have you asked God to remove any spirit, soul and heart ties created by involvement? When did you last see, talk, email or have any other contact with that person?
- Were there any lies or deliberate omissions from what you told your wife about your sexual history prior to your marriage that need to be confessed?
- In an average week, how much time did you spend on your sexual sin?
- In your worst week, how much time did you spend on your sexual sin?
- How much money have you spent on your sexual sin?
- How have you lied to and or deceived her about your struggle? I.e. has she found out small things in the past or asked questions you answered with outright lies, deceptions or minimizations. Have you allowed or even encouraged her to assume you were "doing okay" when in reality you were still acting out?

- What steps have you taken to deal with your sexual sin?
- What practical steps do you know you need to take to deal with your sexual sin?
- How much of your struggle does your wife already know?
- What specifically do you fear will happen when you confess your sin to your wife?
- Have you confessed your sin to God and to another Christian man? If you haven't, we recommend you do both of these things before disclosing to your wife so you are not asking her to offer you God's immediate forgiveness.



We highly recommend you spend time in prayer asking God to guide your time of disclosure with your wife. There are so many things that can be misunderstood on top of the incredibly painful reality your sin has created. You must have His guidance and protection. We also recommend you have someone you have already shared this with be praying for and with you prior to your meeting.

Telling others about
your struggle

You Cannot Lie Your Way Through Recovery

First, you cannot lie your way through recovery. One of the core struggles for all addicts is deception. We learned to deceive as small children and we have mastered the art through years of practice. Often, lies come out of our mouths even before we realize they are untrue. What does this have to do with the question of, "Who do I tell?" In the practical aspects of daily living, there is a huge connection.

You Can Withhold Information from "Unsafe" People

Second, you can honestly withhold information from "unsafe people." Not everyone in your circle of relationships is safe. Some are unsafe because they will hold your sin against you. They will see you as a "pervert" and look down their spiritual nose at you because they *"would never do anything like that."* Of course, that is their delusion and God will deal with them for their arrogance. However, some men, especially those with deep rejection wounds, are not strong enough in early recovery to face that kind of rejection, so being "truthful" could have some very damaging results.

Some people are unsafe because they want to "fix" you. If you tell them you have a problem and you are working on it, they want to jump in the middle of your mess and make sure you do it the right way (i.e. their way). Often times, Christian fixers want to throw scripture or spiritual disciplines at you as if all it takes to defeat an addiction is more will power or "the right answers." These individuals are probably even more unsafe than those who would reject you because so often what they say sounds good and has scriptural backing or quotes behind it.

Tell Someone in Your Church

Third, you will worship with more freedom if you tell at least one person in your church. We have found that men who open up to their pastor, an elder or at least a mature couple in their local church find themselves much more open to hearing from God and enjoying their church experience. One of Satan's primary weapons against us is shame. One of his greatest fears is that we might actually open our ears to hear the Word of God and our hearts to the praises of God's people and, as a result, experience God's grace in church. Therefore, if you haven't told anyone at your church, he will constantly whisper things to you like, *"If they knew what you struggled with, they would run you out of this place."* Listening to these messages of condemnation leaves us at best distracted and most likely completely numb and safely insulated from God's message of grace.

Telling a few safe individuals in your church, however, gives you a tangible answer to Satan's lies. *"No, Bob knows about my struggle and he greeted me this morning, saying, 'It's good to see you today.'" You might be thinking, "I don't know, my church is pretty serious about sin, if anyone knows I'm struggling, they won't respond well."* Most likely that is another one of Satan's lies trying to keep you in isolation. Even in the most legalistic churches there is almost always someone who has struggled in life who would embrace you even in the midst of your mess. If there really are not any safe people in your church, then maybe you should ask the question, *"Is it good for my heart to be in a church that doesn't embrace honest strugglers?"*

If you are in any kind of a leadership role in your church, the thought of telling someone may invoke an even greater response of fear. However, that fear, and even the realities behind that fear, is still not a good reason to remain hidden in darkness. Yes, they may ask you to step down from your position of leadership. Yes, they may want more accountability from you in order to protect children and those working with you from your addiction. However, are those things inherently bad? While the addict within you may think "Yes," I would say "No." I was a minister wrestling with my addiction, and looking back, I now realize one of the best things I could have done for my recovery and my marriage was to step out of the fishbowl of ministry and focus on healing. The fact your leadership might remove you from a position does not inherently mean they are "unsafe." In fact, I would argue that removing you from your position (whether paid or un-paid) might be one of the best things they could do for your heart.

A leadership that removes you from roles of service may be protecting both you and other sheep in its flock. If they ask you to step away from your role, but do so offering to pray for you and walk beside you as you heal, then thank God for their courage and faithfulness to you and your church. Do not resent them for taking away your position.

Pray for Wisdom and Trust GOD

Obviously, there are more situations than could possibly be addressed. The tension of who do I tell and who do I not tell will be a struggle for every individual in recovery. God is faithful and if you ask He will show you who you need to tell. Sometimes He will prompt you to tell people you don't want to and sometimes He will discourage you from telling those you think are safe. Learn to listen to His promptings and learn to be obedient. Please also know that Romans 8:28 applies even in this context:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purposes." Even if you tell the "wrong" person, even if seemingly horrible things happen because of your transparency, trust God will use that for your sanctification and will bless you through the struggle.

Application & Journaling Questions

1. Who have you told about your struggle? How have they responded and how has their response impacted you?
2. Who do you sense God leading you to tell? Who should you not tell? Why?
3. Who are you afraid to tell? Why?
4. What circumstances can you anticipate that could force you to decide on the spot whether or not you should tell an individual about your struggle?
5. What is your wife's comfort level with you telling others about your struggle? If you haven't talked to her about this, when will you?
6. What is the worst thing that could happen if your struggle were broadcast to everyone? In light of Romans 8:28, what "good things" could you envision God doing with that "worst thing?"
7. Take a moment to pray and ask God specifically if there is anyone He wants you to tell about your struggles at this time. If any names or faces come to mind, write them down and begin praying about how and what to tell them.

Recovery with your Wife:
HIS realities ... HER realities

His Realities	Her Realities
I'm becoming a man of integrity.	I've been betrayed.
I've never loved her more.	I've never felt less loved or worthy.
I'm beginning to see how much I value our marriage.	I've never realized until now how little the marriage meant to him.
Finally, I'm an honest man.	How could he have lied like this?
I understand the healing process takes three to five years, but I'm pretty sure I can complete that path to freedom in a couple years.	Five years seems like a lifetime to deal with this pain.

Reality #1:

I'm becoming a man of integrity.

For the addict, there is generally a great sense of relief and victory that comes with finally bringing things into the light. Men often describe feeling like a thousand pound weight has been taken off their shoulder once they tell their "secrets" to other men and especially to their wife whom they know they have offended. They know their confession hurts her deeply but at least the weight of the "secret" is gone.

I've been betrayed.

The wife often feels like that thousand pound weight has been dumped directly on her shoulders. She feels an incredible sense of betrayal because on your wedding day, you promised (among other things) to "love, honor, cherish and forsake all others." Yet instead of "forsaking all others" you have kept a harem of women in your computer, your mind and in some cases in your very bed.

This hurt goes much deeper than most men want to see or admit. The depth of the pain came home for me a few years back as I was meeting with a new couple. I had a woman tell me her story in the presence of her husband.

With some pain, she told of growing up in a home with an alcoholic father and of being raped when she was a teenager. When she described the day she discovered the computer trail of her husband's addiction, she broke down in tears and said, "***This hurts much more than being raped.***" My heart (and thankfully her husband's) broke for her that day. Hopefully, the fact that you have made it this far in the manual, means you are starting to come out of the fog of the addiction and are beginning to see the painful effects your sin has had on your wife and on others.

Yet in spite of your confession and the hurt it brings to the surface of your wife's life, most wives truly want to love and work through the hurt. (It continues to amaze me what women are willing and able to forgive once they know they know the truth.) However, a wife's desire to save the marriage and to continue to love often increases the weight of your confessions. While parts of her may rejoice at finally knowing the truth and in seeing you take positive steps towards healing and recovery, her co-dependency struggles may cause her to attempt to mask her pain in order to not cause you more stress which she fears would lead to more acting out.

Wives are often very isolated, afraid to talk to friends or family out of the fear of being exposed and out of respect for you. After all, it isn't her place to announce your sin to the rest of the world. You feel better because you are finally becoming an honest man. She feels like death because her world has crumbled, and yet she must still hold things together for you, for her children and for herself. His reality "I am finally becoming a man of integrity" and her reality "I have been betrayed" are radically different.

Reality #2

I have never loved her more.

As a man stops looking at pornography and acting out sexually, he often begins to see his wife in a whole new light. I can't tell you how many times I have heard men in our groups say things like: "*My wife is just so amazing. She has stuck with me through the struggle and I don't deserve to be with her.*" As they stop feasting on the artificial world of young models, silicone implants and digital airbrushing, they begin to catch a new glimpse and hunger for her physical beauty. As a man moves out of the fog of the addiction he can finally begin to appreciate the incredible gift God has given him.

I've never felt less loved or worthy.

At the same time, his wife often feels completely rejected and extremely self-conscious about her beauty and her worth as a woman. After all, "*If I had been enough, he wouldn't have needed others.*" Wives often begin questioning everything. "*Has he ever really loved me?*" "*Were those gifts genuine or merely guilt offerings trying to buy his way out of his guilt?*"

They also begin putting pieces together and realize that many of the times you were "too busy" with work, projects etc. to be with her or your kids you were in reality spending hours on-line looking at pornography. Satan tells her you would rather spend time debasing yourself than being with her and he uses that realization to scream his lies about her lack of beauty and worth. Your reality, "*I've never loved her more*" and her reality, "*I've never felt less loved or worthy*" are miles apart.

Reality #3

I'm beginning to see how much I value our marriage.

A man in recovery begins to realize how much he truly values the marriage and how he longs for real connection and relationship. Satan uses the noose of sexual addiction to constantly drive a man to deeper and deeper levels of isolation. As the noose tightens he becomes less and less able to recognize his need for relationship. One man illustrated this in a painful way when he described fantasizing about his wife and child being killed in a car wreck. "*I remember thinking how much better my life would be. After all our sex life was pretty much non-existent and I got more out of masturbation anyway. If my wife and child were gone, I could take care of myself and not have the constant conflict and pain that comes with the marriage.*" This of course was a lie straight from the pit of hell and his memory of the thought is a painful reminder of what the addiction had done to his heart. Thankfully, as he has come out of his addiction, he has seen more clearly every day just how much his wife and child mean to him.

I've never realized until now how little the marriage meant to him.

A wife, however, often feels a very opposite response. "*How could he value our marriage so little as to waste time, money and affection on this trash?*" "*How little is our marriage worth to him that he would risk losing it over a brief thrill of looking at pixels on a screen or dots on a page?*" Once again, his reality and her reality are night and day.

Reality #4

Finally, I'm an honest man.

As a man starts bringing his sin into the light, he discovers the strength that comes from being honest. Beneath the sexual addiction is almost always an addiction to deception that bleeds over into every area of his life. As he begins to be honest about his sexual issues, he also begins to speak the truth in other areas and it feels very good.

How could he have lied like this?

His wife, however, sees for the first time how deep the deception really runs. She remembers times when his words didn't seem to match reality. She remembers times when her gut knew he was lying but she didn't know how to trust herself and instead took him at his word. I can't tell you how many times a wife in my office has said something to the effect of, "***I can handle the sexual sin, what I can't handle is the mountain of lies and deceptions that have piled up through the years.***" This is one reason a polygraph exam can be so helpful. Once a wife believes she knows the truth, she can usually start the healing process. He may see becoming an honest man in his future; however, all she can see is the mountain of lies from his past.

Reality #5

Three to five years.

The last reality may be the most difficult chasm of all. If the husband is forty years old, he has most likely been fighting this issue for over thirty years. To him, three to five years doesn't sound that bad. Besides, as a "master of the universe" he likely believes he can do it in half the time it takes normal guys.

Five years seems like a lifetime to deal with this pain.

His wife, however, hears "three to five years" and thinks it is an eternity. He feels the pendulum shift in the direction of recovery while she feels the pendulum shift in a direction that appears to be taking her over a cliff. She isn't sure she can make it through the week, let alone three to five years.

Accept Her Realities

The realities are vastly different and it is essential for a husband to recognize, acknowledge and honor her reality. She must have the time, space and resources necessary to grieve her losses and begin her own journey of healing and recovery.

There may come a day where your wife is genuinely proud of you for what you are doing, however, don't expect that early on. She can't be your recovery cheerleader and be honest about her pain at the same time. Therefore, you must seek your encouragement and support from your brothers in recovery and not be surprised when you encounter her anger and resentment instead of her applause. The men in your group can rejoice with you when you go thirty days without looking at porn or masturbating. She is just as likely to think, "***Great! It has only taken you ten years of marriage to get committed enough to go thirty days without committing adultery against me.***"

Don't, however, lose hope. While it may be difficult to see right now, if you continue on the road of recovery, you will become stronger and more able to fight for her heart as well as your own. You will also discover God wants to use your journey to bring things to the surface that need healing in your wife's life as well as your own. God has an amazing way of redeeming the very things that Satan intended for our destruction. If you and your wife will allow Him, He will even use your painful and opposite realities to draw you closer to Him and eventually closer to each other. I know I was personally blown away one night as my wife and I were praying. To my total amazement, I heard her pray, *"Thank You Lord for his sexual addiction and for the way You have used it to bring the broken places in my life and in our marriage into the light for Your healing. Thank You for loving us so much."*

So how do you go about the process of allowing God to bring healing in your marriage? Well, first you must understand that each individual and each couple have a unique path that only God can guide them through. However, in spite of each journey's uniqueness, we have learned some things through the years that couples have found helpful in this process. Some of these lessons are covered in the sections below.

Schedule Weekly "Recovery Meetings"

One of the first activities that many couples have found helpful is to have weekly "Recovery Meetings." Having them on a weekly basis helps couples avoid the opposite ditches of avoidance and obsession. Some wives want to know every detail about their husband's struggle and recovery, others just want him to get fixed so they can move on with life. When recovery is the only subject of interaction, it often becomes overwhelming and exhausting to one or both partners.

When recovery is never discussed, the wife typically falls either into the ditch of fear - assuming that progress isn't being made - or denial - assuming that since he hasn't said anything he must be doing well. A weekly recovery meeting can be a helpful balance as it provides a time to get things on the table but doesn't make it an all-consuming subject. It is also necessary to note that you need to have completed your "Personal Recovery Plan" and she should have some guidance from a counselor about co-dependency issues and her own personal recovery and protection plan.

Most couples find it helps to have a scheduled day, place, time and duration for the meeting, i.e. Thursday nights from 9-10 we will meet at the kitchen table. If your wife has to ask you repeatedly for a recovery meeting than it communicates very clearly you don't want to do it. Satan will then twist that into a message saying you don't want to be with her. However, your taking the initiative to meet her at the table says you care for her heart and want to move towards her in your recovery.

It is important to note that if you don't talk to her about the progress you are making, it is only natural for her to be fearful or assume you have fallen into old ruts. Therefore, it is crucial for you to be specific in things you share with her on a regular basis. In some ways, it is similar to what you should share with your counsellor. However it is essential to remember that she is your wife who pays a much higher price whenever you struggle in the sexual arena. So what should you share?

Share What You Have Done

First, you probably want to give her some specific things you have done for your recovery this week. For example: *"I went to two groups, made phone calls five of the seven days, worked on materials and journal / answered workbook questions every day."* One of the things we constantly tell wives as to whether or not they can be hopeful that real change is taking place is if they see their husband actually doing the recovery behaviors. Telling her what you are doing gives her reasons to hope you are moving in positive directions.

Share What You Have Learned

Second, it is a great time to tell her about specific things you are learning about yourself, about God and about your struggle. If you are actively doing recovery work you will have lots of things you can and will want to share. No, you don't want to share everything you have learned as some of it will rub salt in old wounds. (see *"Telling Your Wife About Your Struggle"* for a reminder of what should and should not be shared.) However, if you have been working through *Book 1 Growing up and the Brain* and recognize the emotional desert you grew up in that contributed to you developing a dismissive attachment style, sharing what God is showing you can be very encouraging to her and healing for you. This is especially true when God reveals a key event where Satan sowed his lie that you are not worthy of love.

Share Your Struggles

Third, you need to let her know if you have had any slips or crashes during the week. It should not be her responsibility to ask or interrogate you but your responsibility to bring things into the light. In fact, it would be even better if you told her about slips and/or crashes shortly after processing them with your counsellor or one of the men from your recovery group. She needs to know how safe it is for her to open her heart and her body to you. Therefore, communicating to her, *"I've had a good week without any slips or crashes"* can have a powerful calming effect for her heart.

Let Her Share and Ask Questions

Fourth, you should give her time to ask anything she needs to know about your week, your recovery etc. as well as tell you about what she is learning on her journey. You will probably need to pray for God to lower your defensive nature and to empower you to be honest, even if there is a great likelihood that honesty will bring pain to you or to her.

Side note: There are some things that are not good for her to ask. This is one reason it is helpful if she receives individual counseling and/or participates in a wives' recovery group. It is also very helpful if you have regular couples counseling sessions to help you work through this difficult time in your lives and marriage. My wife put it very well one day when she asked in the wives' group she leads, "*What are the odds of an addict and a co-dependent figuring out a good path on their own?*"

Share What You Appreciate About Her

A great closing to a recovery meeting would be to share something God has shown you about your wife you appreciate. This may be difficult because of what you discuss; however, the difficult times may be the most important times to communicate affirmations as it can help you return to joy together.

Paul says "*Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry*" (**Eph. 4:26**) and that command may seem impossible in these difficult times. However, it is helpful to many to understand a little about the chemical reaction in your brain during times of high stress and anger.

During these times, the body releases a stress chemical called **cortisol**, which acts like a solvent. **When you go to sleep without any resolution, without returning to joy, your brain soaks in the cortisol, which destroys new connections.** No, you will not be able to resolve all issues that come up in recovery meetings or other times. However, it is important to try to find a way to communicate to your wife that even though things are hard, you are glad to be with her. Again, it isn't the words, but the non-verbal communications that expresses genuine joy. Therefore, it cannot be faked. However, taking a few moments to reflect about and to speak your joy to her can help you remember (in spite of the painful place you are at), you really do love her and want to be with her.

Pray

Finally, take the initiative to pray with your wife about the things you have discussed, even, and especially, if the discussion has been difficult. Thank Him for the things you appreciate about your wife and ask God to speak truth to both of you as He brings the healing He desires for your heart, her heart and for your relationship. Prayer is often an essential element of returning to joy.

Expect Conflicts During Your Recovery Meetings

Inevitably, conflicts will arise during your recovery meetings. Satan will use every trick in his book to twist your actions, words and non-verbal communication into attacks against her and vice versa. Therefore, it is crucial for you to invite, and be aware of, Jesus' presence in your meeting. In **Matthew 18:19-20** Jesus says: "*Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in Heaven. For where two or three come together in My Name, there am I with them.*" We usually think of these verses in the context of "church" e.g. if there are two or three of us together we can have church because Jesus has promised to be with us. However, if you look at the verse in context, you will see Jesus actually says this in the context of **conflict**. Jesus promises His Presence as a Comfort and Mediator in times of disagreement. Therefore, it is incredibly helpful to recognize and look for His Presence in these difficult moments. You are not alone. Jesus is right there with you and with your wife and, if you let Him, He will empower you to work things out.

Application & Journaling Questions

1. How did your "full disclosure" meeting go with your wife? (section starts on pg. 134) What good things have come out of your confessions? What difficult things? If you haven't done this yet, why haven't you?
2. What initial reactions do you have towards reading the "His Realities/ Her Realities" chart?
3. If you have shared this chart with your wife, what were her reactions?
4. How can you relate to the idea of removing the thousand pound weight off your shoulders?
5. What evidence can you see about that weight being transferred to your wife?
6. What impact does the woman's tearful statement, "*this hurts so much more than being raped*" have on you? Do you see that depth of pain in your wife's heart?
7. What evidence do you see of your wife attempting to protect you (or herself) from feeling the real weight of the betrayal you have brought on her?
8. How do you see your wife differently today compared to before you began the recovery journey?
9. When and how do you sense your hunger and appreciation for her physical beauty increasing?
10. What lies do you think Satan is telling your wife about her worth and her beauty? What can you do at this point to counter those lies? What can you do in the future?
11. How do you see Satan using your addiction to drive you to isolation in similar ways as the man who confessed to fantasizing about his wife and child's death?
12. How is her value and worth changing in your eyes as you proceed in your recovery?
13. How are you discovering "the strength that comes from being honest"? Where, besides your sexual addiction, is God challenging your deceptions?
14. How is your wife responding to seeing your deceptions more clearly? What can you do when she asks you about them?
15. Are there any other deceptions that you are aware of needing to confess to her? (Could be about money, time or many other things not seemingly connected to your sexual addiction.)
16. How does your wife's anger over your deceptions impact you? Do you find yourself getting defensive, angry, depressed, going to despair? What can you do to allow her to struggle and yet continue on the road of honesty?

17. How does the wife's prayer: "Thank You Lord for his sexual addiction and for the way you have used it to bring the broken places in my life and in our marriage into the Light for Your healing. Thank You for loving us so much" impact you?
18. How does the reality of a 3-5 year recovery time hit you? How does it hit your wife?
19. What redemptive threads can you already see in your recovery journey? What surprising things have you seen God do in the middle of messy and painful places?
20. How does the thought of a weekly "Recovery Meeting" impact you?
21. What do you and your wife each have to do to be in a place where recovery meetings would even be possible?
22. Which ditch does your wife more typically fall into when it comes to knowing about your recovery, the ditch of obsession or the ditch of denial?
23. What day and time do you think would be good for recovery meetings?
24. How long do you think they should last?
25. What will make it difficult for you to take the initiative and/or keep recovery meeting appointments?
26. What impact would giving your wife a weekly accounting of things you have done for your recovery have on your motivation to do the work?
27. Have you shared something significant you have learned about yourself during the recovery process? If yes, what was that like? How did she respond? How did you feel telling her? How did you feel after sharing your heart?
28. What conviction do you have about confessing "slips and crashes"? What has it been like for you in the past when you have withheld things from her because after all, she didn't ask?
29. How do you feel about giving her permission to ask you anything she wants about your recovery?
30. What fears do you have? How legitimate are those fears?
31. What does Matthew 18: 19-20 say to you about conflicts with your wife? Have you ever thought of using that verse in this context?
32. Take ten minutes and list as many things as you can think of that you appreciate about your wife.
33. What does God's command to not let the sun go down on your anger and the chemical cortisol say to you about the need to repair and "return to joy" whenever possible?
34. How can you communicate to your wife that you are glad to be with her when you aren't able to resolve an issue or disagreement between you?
35. How difficult is it for you to pray with your wife? Do you have any ideas why it is difficult? What can you do to make praying with her a greater priority?

Recovery with your Wife:
"What about sex?"

Physical and Sexual Intimacy

As we continue to focus on how to walk out our recovery with our wives, we will focus this chapter on another area that is always difficult in recovery: physical and sexual intimacy. Pornography and sexual addiction has warped and distorted both your and your wife's perspective on sex. Regaining God's perspective is difficult and yet essential in your recovery. It is therefore essential to look to scripture and see that sex is a gift from God and it is very good.

Regaining God's Perspective

Something was good. In fact, as the Creation account in Genesis tells us "it was very good." God created Adam and dropped him in the middle of "Heaven on earth," the Garden of Eden. The Garden met all Adam's physical needs: When hungry, he picked incredible fruit from one of the many trees. When thirsty, he drew water from crystal clear streams with no pollution or contaminants. The garden met his physical needs and God Himself met Adam's spiritual needs. They walked together, talked constantly and had no barriers of sin or distance between them. Yet something was still missing. "The LORD God said" *'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'* (**Genesis 2:18**).

Alone? How can Adam be alone when he walks with God? I think the answer lies in the part of our nature that God created for intimacy. **Genesis 1:27** says, *"So God created man in His own Image, in the Image of God He created him; male and female He created them."*

God is a relational God. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have been in intimate relationship for all eternity and man is an outgrowth of their relationship. Part of God's Image stamped deep in our soul is the need to reflect the relationship of the Trinity here on earth. In fact, the astute reader can see the Trinitarian reflection in God's decision, *"I will make a helper (Hebrew ezer) suitable for him"* because scripture primarily uses "helper" (ezer) to refer to God Himself. Examples of this can be seen in the following verses:

My father's God was my helper (Exodus 18:4).

We wait in hope for the LORD: He is our help and our shield (Ps. 33:20). You are my Help and my Deliverer; o LORD, do not delay (Ps. 70:5).

Adam is alone and therefore unable to reflect God's relational glory so God chooses to create a representative of Himself to walk beside and partner with His son. Adam, however, is not ready for God's incredible gift. He does not yet see his need so God has him name all the animals.

The implication appears to be that he is to name each animal and choose a "helper," a representative of God, from among them. This begs the question: Did God really expect him to find a life partner in a hippo or a giraffe? Of course not! God simply wanted Adam to recognize his need for relationship, which leaves the end of verse 20, one of the saddest phrases in scripture: "*But for Adam, no suitable helper was found.*" At this point, God causes Adam to sink into a deep sleep: (Maybe he was even depressed over seeing his loneliness?)

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man.

Try to imagine the scene as Adam awakes. I picture him wiping the sleep from his eyes and catching a glimpse of Eve. When he sees her he realizes that she is like him, but not like him. She is beautiful. She is literally, physically and otherwise, the perfect woman. She is femininity as God designed it. She is alluring, mysterious and above all else lovely. If she were here today, every magazine would want her picture on its cover. Adam's response is one of amazement. His jaw is on the Garden floor and when he recovers he bursts out in song, "*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.*" Hebrew scholars tell us his words are pure poetry. They are the lyrics to the original love song spoken by a man who realizes that he has been given an incredible gift: a life partner, a wife, a soul mate.

The writer of Genesis then adds these powerful words, "*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*" The phrase "one flesh" is a rich expression. It means that man and wife are to be extensions of one another. It means they are to be one emotionally, physically and spiritually, and it also refers to sexual intercourse - the physical union of man and wife.

Now, here is the crazy thing. Sex is God's idea, His Creation. It wasn't invented by Hollywood or some dirty old man. No, God created sex and when He created sex, He created something beautiful, mysterious and incredibly enjoyable. John Eldredge in *Wild at Heart* paints a beautiful picture of God's design for our sexual intimacy:

Our sexuality offers a parable of amazing depth ... The man comes to offer his strength and the woman invites the man into herself, an act that requires courage and vulnerability and selflessness for both of them.

Notice first that if the man will not rise to the occasion, nothing will happen. He must move; his strength must swell before he can enter her.

But neither will the love consummate unless the woman opens herself in stunning vulnerability. When both are living as they were meant to live, the man enters his woman and offers her his strength. He spills himself there, in her, for her; she draws him in, embraces and envelopes him. When all is over he is spent, but ah, what a sweet death it is.

God created intercourse to be a deep and powerful connection between man and wife. Even our physical anatomy speaks to God's design of enjoyment and intimacy through the sexual union. Dan Allender in *The Wounded Heart* says, "God has built the human body with more nerve endings on the head of the penis and the clitoris than anywhere else in the body other than the taste buds. God is concerned with our pleasure, otherwise it would be difficult to understand His choice to have so created male and female."

God's design is for husband and wife to experience this intimate and powerful union with one another so that they will be super-glued together. In **Ephesians 5:31** Paul says, "*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.*" The word the NIV translates as "unite" comes from the Greek word *Kallao* which literally means "to glue together...". God designed sexual union between man and wife to be "super-glue" that bonds one flesh to the other. (This is why the modern idea of "casual sex" is ludicrous: try super-gluing your fingers together and then getting them apart "casually. ")

A Picture of Our Relationship with God

Paul goes on to tell us that this intimacy of "one flesh" is a "profound mystery" that he compares to the relationship between Christ and the Church. Not only does God create sex for the enjoyment of husband and wife, He also created it to give us a glimpse of Himself.

God gives the intimacy of husband and wife, and especially the intimacy of sexual union to help us understand the powerful connection He wants to have with us. Sex is a parable of the relationship of the Trinity and of its relationship with us. In fact, throughout scripture, the ancient writers use the phrase "to know God," and the word they use most frequently is the same word used in **Genesis 4: 1**, "*Adam knew his wife Eve and she gave birth to a son*" (KN).

A Favorite Target of Satan

Sex is God's gift to man so he can know and be known and so he can catch a glimpse of God. Therefore, is it any wonder Satan would attack God's gift of sex? Is it any wonder that from the beginning of time, he has attacked man and woman at this place of intimacy?

In **John 10: 10** Jesus says, "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.*"

God gave the gift of sex as part of His plan for His Creation to have "life to the full." The Enemy comes to steal, and kill and destroy any place where he sees anyone experiencing a taste of real life.

Jesus, in order to bring life "to the full," brings redemption in the very places Satan twisted and distorted his gifts of freedom. This is why recovery should also address our sexual relationship. In our addiction, in our sin, we allowed Satan to use us as his instruments of abuse to pummel our wives. Now it is time to allow God to bring His Healing Balm to both us and to our wives.

Helping Your Wife Heal

Following the narrow road of recovery is of course the crucial first step in allowing Him to bring His healing. You can't help either of you heal if you continue to abuse yourself, your wife and others through sexual acting out.



Additionally, one of the first things you can do to help your wife heal from the sexual abuse of your addiction is to allow her the time necessary to feel safe enough for physical intimacies. Some wives respond very quickly, (which at times is a gift of God's grace and at other times a sign of their own brokenness), others take weeks, months and even years to feel safe enough for sexual intimacies to resume. You must allow her the time she needs without pressuring, manipulating or badgering her. She may need counseling to address her own issues or she may just need time to grieve her losses and find God's forgiveness for you. Yes, waiting is difficult and often painful, but remember: sex is not life.

Once your wife is ready to move forward in physical intimacies, be willing to go slowly. She may need you just to sit on the couch beside her just talking and holding hands for many evenings. She may need you to court her. She definitely needs you to talk with her and communicate clearly and repetitively that you want her heart and not just her body.

When she tells you she is ready for more, it is critical you do everything you can to move out of your old pornographic ideas about sex: you must learn the difference between "making love" and "having sex."

- First, you must be diligent about staying connected to her in ways that feel good to her. Talking and maintaining eye contact as much as physically possible is a must. It will also help if you have a light on or candles lit in the room. (Remember, most joy communication takes place through the non-verbal signals coming from the left side of your face and particularly from your left eye.) Talking to her and looking in her eyes will help prevent you from fantasizing about your pornography or previous sexual experiences and communicate your desire to be with her and not just to have a sexual release.
- It may also be helpful to ask her permission as you move forward. I.e. softly asking "may I" can help her feel a greater sense of safety and allow her to enjoy your touch rather than feel groped. Of course, if she says "no", honoring her boundary and allowing her the time she needs will speak volumes to her. Doing what you want anyway will do great harm even if she doesn't resist any further than saying "no."

Do not assume your sex life will go back to the same places it was before she knew of your struggle.

In fact, you shouldn't want it to as most likely it was influenced and tainted by your pornographic view of sex. Therefore, activities and positions should be discussed and not assumed or manipulated. It is important to understand that your pornography may have created an appetite for things that do not feel good to her. It isn't her responsibility to meet those distorted desires. Yes, God gives great freedom in the marriage bedroom. You are free to explore and enjoy one another in many different ways. However, if any of those ways feel degrading, painful or unpleasant to one partner then pushing for them is not an act of love but a selfish act.

It is also helpful to change your goal and desire for sex. Stop focusing on orgasm, yours or hers, and **begin focusing on sharing joy**. The part of your brain that controls your genitals is immediately adjacent to your attachment center and secure attachments are primarily formed through the alternating rhythm of joy and quiet. Sexual intercourse is, therefore, an intricate dance designed by God for the sharing of joy and quiet together. However, if you are anxious about whether or not you are "pleasing" your spouse, your ability to communicate, "I'm glad as glad can be" will be greatly diminished. If, however, your focus is on the joy and delight you have for her, you will be surprised how naturally you will communicate that to her. **What she needs most is not orgasm, but to know you delight in her: body, mind, heart and soul.**

You should also be aware that most wives struggle with physical intimacy long after the first "reconnection." Don't assume because she was in a place one night to be intimate that she is ready for regular and consistent intimacies. There will be days when she struggles with her hurts, with stress and many other things that make it difficult and even painful for her to think about being physically intimate.

Again, you must allow her the space she needs. One avenue that has helped many couples in this place is for the husband to surrender his right to ask or initiate for a period of time. No, this isn't ideal, but in a perfect world a husband would not have a sexual addiction. Surrendering the right to initiate allows the wife the freedom to move towards her husband when she is able without the constant fear of having to say "no" again and again. It also helps the husband as being told "no" almost always feels like rejection. One place this may not be a good idea is for husbands who are extremely dismissive (see Book 1 Growing up and the Brain on Secure and Insecure Attachment Styles) and tend to be "sexually anorexic." In other words, if your wife has always had to be the initiator, you may need to actively pursue her as a way of moving towards her heart.

Establishing Protective Boundaries

Finally, you and your wife need to discuss what length of time you both need as a protective boundary if you have a slip or a crash. I don't believe it is possible to separate pornography from the marriage bed. When a man consumes pornography, he inevitably brings those images and ideas with him when he is with his wife. Many men have confessed in group meetings and one-on-one sessions to playing the slide shows or movies in their heads while being physically intimate with their wife.

That is one of the reasons many wives complain that they don't feel like their husband is really with them during sex. This is incredibly harmful to both partners and must be countered. Having lights on and conversation helps greatly, but having time between acting out and being intimate is essential.

Therefore, we encourage couples to make a boundary that says something to the effect of "no physical intimacies until at least ___ days after the husband has confessed his crash to his wife." We recommend a minimum of 7 days before resuming physical intimacy. This means a husband commits to not ask or try to initiate intimacies if he has had problems during the time they've determined. It also means he commits to "coming clean" if she begins initiating or asks for sexual intimacy. This provides a layer of safety for the wife and helps the husband in many ways.

First, it helps him develop a healthier separation between making love with his wife and the pornographic failures of his past.

Secondly, it helps with motivation. If a man know knows a crash will close the bedroom door for at least a week, he may think twice about clicking on that porn spam. It also has an added benefit in that it encourages the husband to confess things quicker. Remember, the longer secrets remains in the dark, the stronger their impact grows.

It is Worth the Wait!

Recovery of the marital bed and God's gift of sex is a very difficult and yet incredibly rewarding part of the process. Don't be dismayed if it doesn't happen quickly or if you make many blunders on the way. Our God is a redeeming God and He is capable of redeeming the sexual relationship with your wife even though you have done great harm. It can indeed be very good. I pray you will discover more of the good gifts He has for you and for your wife in this arena.



Application & Journaling Questions

1. How has God's perspective on sex been presented to you in the past? How accurate of a picture have you been given?
2. In light of Eve being created as Adam's "helper," a word used primarily for God in the Old Testament, what does it mean for your wife to be your "helper?" How has that been twisted in your history?
3. Try to put yourself in Adam's place: What would it have been like to wake up and see Eve for the first time? When have you, or how can you, begin to see your wife this way?
4. What does God's design of our physical bodies say to you about His desire for you and your wife in the sexual arena?
5. How does the super-glue analogy explain some of your pain?
6. How does it strike you to hear that God wants to use your sexual intimacy with your wife to teach you more of what intimacy with Him really is?
7. How committed are you to using your sexuality as a Healing Balm instead of an abusing club? What will that transformation require?
8. What has your wife communicated to you about her need for time and space when it comes to sexual intimacy? Do you believe she feels safe space when it comes to sexual intimacy? Do you believe she feels safe enough to tell you what she really needs?
9. What specific suggestions from this chapter do you need to put into practice when it comes to being physically intimate with your wife?
10. What is the difference between "making love" and "having sex?" How does that play out in your marriage?
11. Is the idea of using sex to share joy new to you? How does it strike you?
12. Who historically has initiated sexual intimacies? Do you see the value of giving up your right to ask or initiate for a time? What fears and concerns does that bring up for you? How long of time do you think you and your wife need where she is in control of your sexual relationship?
13. How long do you think you need after a crash before you can stay connected to your wife and not wander back into ugly places in your mind? Can you understand your wife's need for this safety time?
14. What hopes and fears do you have concerning your sexual relationship with your wife?

There are many good books, workbooks and recovery programs that can aid you in your continued journey.

I would also encourage you to periodically work through this manual. As you grow and as you heal, you become more able to hear and understand difficult things.

Three crucial thoughts:

- Stay connected to God. He is the Source of Life and the Source of all recovery.
- Stay connected to your brothers in recovery.
- Ask God to show you who He wants you to mentor on this path of recovery.

We encourage you and bless you to persevere on this journey – seeking wholeness and total deliverance. We bless you to discover the PURE JOY of a clean and set free sexual life!

Pull the Plug on Porn³

If you or someone you love is struggling with a porn addiction, take these steps to freedom.

At a men's conference I sponsored last weekend in Philadelphia, some of my friends took the stage and got gut-level honest about their temptations. I was so proud of their courage. Shay, a young father from Ohio, admitted that he was exposed to hard-core pornography when he was only five years old. He began modeling what he saw in X-rated videos when he was just six.

Another guy from Pennsylvania told the men in the audience that he began watching porn when he was a preteen—and this led him to sex with dozens of girls in high school. Until recently this man still battled the shame of his porn habit even though he was a lay leader in his church.

“It's not enough to whisper a quiet prayer under your breath. To break free from a life-controlling habit as powerful as porn, you must talk to someone else. And you should do it sooner, not later.”

Jason, a youth pastor in northwestern Pennsylvania, preached to the men on Friday night about how to reclaim purity in our sex-saturated culture. Like so many of the guys in our conference, Jason had been exposed to porn at a young age. His lust could not be satisfied by masturbation or kinkier videos, so his addiction drove him to seek out multiple girls for instant gratification. That's where porn leads.

Thankfully all these guys eventually found Christ and discovered the grace to escape the porn trap. They are happily married today, and they've been freed from the shame of past failures. But I meet many Christian men who are not so fortunate. A huge percentage of men in church have given up trying to resist temptation.

If you are one of those men (or women) who wears a fake smile when you go to church, pretending to be an “overcomer” when you really are a prisoner of lust, then please consider taking these radical steps. (And if you know someone who is battling this monster, please consider forwarding this message to him or her.)

1. Spill your guts. The first step toward repentance is honesty, and it must be brutal. To repent means to turn 180 degrees, so this decision cannot be half-hearted. It's not enough to whisper a quiet prayer under your breath.

³ Written by J. Lee Grady, “*Fire In My Bones*” newsletter, taken from <http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/fire-in-my-bones/32697-pull-the-plug-on-porn>

To break free from a life-controlling habit as powerful as porn, you must talk to someone else. And you should do it sooner, not later.

James 5:16 says, “Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed” (NASB). I have prayed with many guys about their porn addictions, and they have testified that the power of their sin broke the moment they admitted it. Sit down with someone (preferably a more mature Christian you know and trust) and put all your cards on the table. If you humble yourself, God will give you grace to change.

2. Get ruthless. Sin is deceitful. It loves to make up excuses such as, “No one knows about your habit, so it’s not hurting anyone,” “I deserve this little treat” or “I can play with fire and not get burned.” Don’t believe the lies. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup, and many men today forfeit their relationship with God by compromising with porn.

You can’t break free from sexual sin by slowly backing away from it or taming it like a pet. The Bible tells us to “flee” from immorality (2 Tim. 2:22). You must lay the axe to the root of your problem. Cut off all access to porn. Say goodbye and slam the door in its face. And if you can’t stop looking at it on your phone or computer, get rid of your phone and computer.

3. Keep no secrets. Guys addicted to porn struggle with constant shame. They can’t enjoy prayer or worship because they feel condemned. They can’t share their faith with others because they feel like hypocrites. And many Christian men are so full of guilt they turn to alcohol or drugs to numb their pain. It’s not enough to confess your sin to a brother once. You must stay in relationship with people who love you enough to confront you. Find one or two accountability partners and make a covenant with them to live transparently. And don’t wait until you fall to call for counsel. Contact them whenever you feel tempted. Send up a flare and ask for help before it’s too late.

4. Refocus your life on others. Lust is ultimately about self-gratification. When a young man gets hooked on porn, he can’t grow up emotionally. This is why some adult men in their 50s and 60s act like 13-year-olds when it comes to sex. They are stuck in perpetual puberty.

You will never break free from the bondage of sexual sin simply by gritting your teeth and trying to forget the images you saw in magazines or videos. You must totally redirect your energies toward serving others: your spouse, your children, your church and the needy people around you. Throw yourself into selfless ministry and starve your illegal urges.

5. Stay filled with the Spirit. None of these previous steps are possible without the Holy Spirit, who is our promised Helper (see John 14:16). Self-help is not the answer. Ask the Spirit to fill your life with His refining fire. He will go to the root of your unholy desires, burn up your lust and give you supernatural ability to resist temptation.

Petition for those caught up
in cybersex and pornography



Background information on Asmodee.

Those who associated with him in the past often call this power The Stinker. His appearance is that of a fat and smelly demonic-looking “man”. He is tall in stature and walks very lightly with a spring in his step. He also possesses wings similar to those of Beelzebub.

Asmodee is heavily involved with sexual immorality and he marries people for Satan. He is responsible for the spirit of Jezebel in the Bible and often works with Baal [1 Kings 16:30-33].

You can also see in 1 Kings 18 how the prophets of God were attacked through this Power. The Bible has much to say about the Jezebel spirit here and in Revelation. Asmodee works primarily with the Principality of Abaddon and reports to him.

The following problems in your life probably indicate the work of Asmodee:

- Prostitution
- Sexual perversion such as homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality
- Barrenness of the womb
- Contempt for one's spouse and marital conflict
- Repeated divorces and the inability to form permanent, cohesive relationships of the deepest kinds such as marriage.
- Miscarriage and the death of children.

Do you think Asmodee is active in Hollywood? Sad to say he is also hard at work in the Church today. The primary responsibility of Asmodee is to pollute the human race with immorality. Because of this goal, he works with the other Principalities and Powers to foster sexual immorality, perversion, pornography, and prostitution.

He marries people spiritually for Satan and has sex with them as do Satan and others. He is the demon responsible for spirit husbands and wives in Africa. People there, even Christians, often have a husband or wife in the spirit world. This is a form of possession and must be dealt with through deliverance ministry.

This is a common problem in Africa as those possessed are involved with water spirits who work with Asmodee. The head of all water spirits, Marine, is half woman and half fish.

She is where the image of a mermaid came from. Another ruler of the water spirit is Leviathan. This is the same Leviathan who started the original rebellion with Belial. He is found in **Job 41, Psalm 74, and Isaiah 27:1.**

In Christian marriage, Asmodee is interested in breaking down the morals of one or both partners. He is responsible for jealousy and uses it as a tool to promote adultery within the marriage. Marriage counselors could learn much by studying the tactics of Asmodee.

He is at work in many ways to destroy the holiness with which God created the institution of marriage. He is responsible for men who become “middle age crazy,” leaving their wife and family for younger women. They find out too late, after the new relationship fades, that it was a mistake. He will also encourage a partner to just leave. He tells them they can find a prettier, more deserving husband or wife.

Asmodee encourages homosexuality as another means to destroy the institution of marriage. Today we see him actively at work encouraging society to do away with marriage altogether. He wants us to junk marriage as being old-fashioned and antiquated. Who needs it and the problems? Just live life and have a good time.

Enjoy sex with as many as you wish and live together with anyone you want, especially if you're divorced and have small children who will become neurotic and feel unloved as a result of this lifestyle. The Dark Kingdom is always looking ahead! That is why they are doing everything possible to destroy the youth of the entire world through every means possible.

People involved in sexual relationships with a spirit husband or wife will have dreams in which they see sexual parts or have sexual intercourse. Often they describe themselves as being caressed sexually in a dream. Severe cases will see demons approaching them in human form demanding to have sex with them. Members of the Dark Kingdom can also use this to cause miscarriage and other problems for humans.

Asmodee gives to his spirit partners the gifts of intelligence, beauty and wealth (sometimes). He does this in order to entice other new recruits. They particularly like to obtain young women whom they send into the church to encourage sexual sins among the ministers.

Based on our case histories, we know that a woman used in this way for very long without deliverance will become a lesbian. And she will find herself unable to be satisfied sexually from either a man or a woman (what we term nymphomania). This person's sex drive and function is totally out of control, being controlled and used by demons. If not delivered, she will eventually commit suicide. This is the final reward for all eternity granted to those who willingly serve the devil and his Power in the Dark Kingdom.

As I think you can see, Asmodee is the Power most responsible for the destruction of the family as we know it today. He and Satan know that without the safety and security of the family unit, mankind is doomed.

Because of his mission, he vehemently fights those organizations that are trying to save the family. He knows if he can stop the family, he can stop the work of God on the earth.

Petition ...

Heavenly Father, I come to You in honest brokenness and repentance about my involvement in opening doors to the sex kingdoms of this world and Satan and for allowing the Power called Asmodee to control my will and therefore my sexual desires. (Asmodee is heavily involved with sexual immorality and responsible for the spirit of Jezebel & Lilith) I ask Your forgiveness, Father, and I ask You to cleanse me of all defilement with Your Holy Fire.

I confess of letting down my guard over my thought life, of the sin of prayerlessness, of the sin of slackness and laziness in my spiritual walk with You. I ask Your forgiveness for not wearing the Helmet of Salvation over my thought life, for opening up to judging and criticizing the Church and other believers. I confess for not wearing the Full Armor of God according to **Ephesians 6**. Please forgive me, Lord.

I ask Your forgiveness, Holy Spirit, because I did not heed Your warnings. I hardened my heart to Your prompting as You tried to get my attention to stop what I was doing. Forgive me for having my conscience seared, from turning away from the Truth, giving attention to deluding and seducing spirits and doctrines that demons teach (**1 Tim 4:2**). Please help me to regain the sensitivity of my conscience and spirit to heed Your Voice again.

Father, I ask that You will grant me the HOPE as I repent and come to know the Truth about how You really feel about this sin. Of how I have grieved You and those that I love, so that I can come to my senses and escape out of the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him (**2 Timothy 2:25-26**).

I call upon Your Name Yahweh Jehoram – Raised up by God and I pray in the Name of Jesus that You will restore me and raise me up and establish me in Your Kingdom.

Lord, I now choose to welcome the Truth into my life. I choose to love the Truth so that I may be saved, cleansed and sanctified from the lawless one/ the spirit of the anti-christ. Set me free from this great power and delusive marvels, from his unlimited seduction to evil and all his wicked deception.

Father, please remove this misleading influence, a working of error and a strong delusion that made me believe what is false because I did not adhere to, trust in, and rely on the Truth, but instead took pleasure in unrighteousness (**2 Thessalonians 2:9-12**).

I confess opening doors to all the different websites, the one leading me on to the next and the voices calling me in the spirit.

Father, I confess for creating and building an altar in the spirit where Satan was worshipped (the chair, table, room, space – all must be cleansed, altar destroyed). I ask you to cleanse and purify all physical aspects used in this worship and ask you to destroy this ungodly altar in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

I petition You to cleanse the contact point of the hand with mouse, fingertips, hand-eye-co-ordination, defilement of eye-gate. Father, we fire all gatekeepers assigned over these eye-gates and ask you to cleanse these gateways from all defilement (also my hands).

Father, I petition that you gather all parts of my spirit and soul held captive in the kingdom of darkness, the castles and the dungeons of cyber space. I ask you to sever all ties, unhook the hooks, and wipe out the footprints in the spirit as well as all passwords that I used.

I ask You to remove all information in the files, records, back-ups, disks, etc. at the various websites and in Satan's satellite system in the heavenlies as well as all evidence of my involvement and presence in the Cyber Space. (The computer where these sites were accessed has been defiled and the secret police registers everyone whom goes into porn sites. There are files now opened against the owner of the computer ... satan's records in his own satellite station in the heavenlies!).

Father, I petition that You remove my passport from every gatekeeper assigned at every gate way to the websites, and also from satan's satellite station.

Father, I petition that sacrifices given to worship at this altar will be redeemed: time, relationships, commitment to You, etc.

Father, I repent of all the worship given not only to Asmodee (Jezebel & Lillith) but also the worship given to Mammon. (This money goes to the storerooms of Satan. The Power demon, Mammon, controls the storerooms of Satan from where he distributes all the gifts brought to Satan through sacrifices. In return he rewards the giver with mainly three gifts: sex, power and money).

Father, I petition that all the money sowed in to this kingdom through this form of worship will be cleansed and redeemed for Your Kingdom. (Entering into world of rapists, women abusers, children rapists, porn Mafia kingdom, porn and drug lords, money was given to these networks to trade with souls, women and children who are held as sex slaves to satisfy the lusts and perversions of men **(Revelations 18:13)**).

I ask Your forgiveness for this, in Y'shua [Jesus] Name. Father, any code or secret name I was given, I renounce and ask you to remove it from me in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

I petition in the Name of Y'shua [Jesus] that You will remove and deliver me from all sexual powers, gifts, sex magic and magical charm. These demonic were used against me through this sin to seduce me as a victim. I pray that You will cleanse me and I re-dedicate my sexuality back unto You in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

I ask that You will purify my body, soul and spirit with the Blood of Y'shua [Jesus]. Lord I want to present my body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to You. I call upon Your Name Yahweh ELiashib – Lord, I pray that You will restore my soul in the Name of Y'shua [Jesus].

I petition, Father, that You will help me to hate this sin as You hate it. I know Your Word says that the beginning of Wisdom is to fear the Lord and the fear of the Lord is to hate sin (**Proverbs 8:13 and 9:10**).

Father, I petition You to sever all ungodly spirit and soul-ties between myself and any spiritual husbands or wives, personalities in pictures, imprints, names or other ways of being connected, in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

I petition, Father, that You will declare any ungodly marriages null and void and destroy all rings, clothing, contracts, covenants, names, titles, jewelry and gifts – physically as well as spiritually – with Your Holy Spirit fire, in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

I repent for defiling my marriage (if unmarried – future spouse) and for being unfaithful to my spouse. Also for defiling and breaking of the holiness with which You have created the institution of the marriage. I ask You Father that You will cleanse, purify and restore my marriage and our marriage-bed altar in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

I petition, Father that You will remove all seed still standing as evidence against me and my marriage, in Y'shua [Jesus] Name and that You will remove any spiritual children from Satan's hands and take them to where you choose, in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

Father, I petition that decoders will be placed at all entrances of my body, soul and spirit inclined to respond to certain codes or triggers. I ask you to deactivate the triggers like, tone of voices, sound waves, adverts, movies, songs, pictures, eyes, place, names, words, perfume, emotions, or touch, in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

Father, I petition that You will enter my imagination area and sweep it clean with Your Broom of Destruction. That You will place Your angels as gatekeepers and fire all other gatekeepers.

Father, I repent for making a covenant with Asmodee (Jezebel and Lilith) through this sin. I ask that You will sever the five cords of Jezebel that controlled me for so long in the Name of Y'shua [Jesus]. I also ask that You will shut and seal the gateways to Lilith and that You will purify my dream world. I ask that You will break the power of Asmodee over my life and that You will dismantle and destroy all ties with this Power demon.

Father, I repent for allowing idolatry in my life – self-love, lust, perversion, fornication, adultery and fantasy. Also for allowing the following spirits to rule me: a lying spirit, a perverse spirit and a spirit of whoredoms.

I also repent for worshipping the god named Eros and for taking part in tantric sex. Because of this sin I have opened myself to be possessed by the Kundulini spirit. I pray that You will close every chakra that was opened in the Name of Y'shua [Jesus]. Please forgive me and deliver me from this evil spirit in Y'shua [Jesus] Name.

I call upon Your Name Yahweh ELiphelet – Lord You are my Deliverance. Father I pray according to **Isaiah 10:27** that the burden will be taken away from my shoulder, and that You will destroy the yoke from my neck with the anointing oil of Your Spirit. I ask this in the Name of Y'shua [Jesus Christ].

Father, I ask that You will strengthen my will and cause it to come into agreement with Your will. I choose to submit to You and to resist the evil one. I thank You Lord that You promise that those who humble themselves under the Mighty Hand of God will be exalted in due time (**1 Pet 5:6**). I declare that You are Yahweh ELuzai – You are my Strength!

I ask You to silence all witnesses testifying against me in the spirit by blotting out this sin with the precious Blood of Y'shua [Jesus].

According to Job 31:1, I dictate a covenant (an agreement) to my eyes that I will not look [lustfully] upon a girl in the Name of Y'shua [Jesus].

Father, I petition that You will protect me from the consequences of the demonic prophecies, covenants, etc. Father, I petition that You will protect me from any punishment or judgment that will come into effect as a result of this petition.

I petition all this in the Almighty Name of Y'shua [Jesus]!

AMEN!

Sign: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Additional information

Pornography: The New Narcotic⁴

by John Piper | 9 October 2013

The new narcotic. Morgan Bennett just published [an article by this title](#). The thesis:

Neurological research has revealed that the effect of internet pornography on the human brain is just as potent — if not more so — than addictive chemical substances such as cocaine or heroin.

To make matters worse, there are 1.9 million cocaine users, and 2 million heroin users, in the United States compared to 40 million regular users of online pornography. Here's why the addictive power of pornography can be worse:

Cocaine is considered a stimulant that increases dopamine levels in the brain. Dopamine is the primary neurotransmitter that most addictive substances release, as it causes a “high” and a subsequent craving for a repetition of the high, rather than a subsequent feeling of satisfaction by way of endorphins.

Heroin, on the other hand, is an opiate, which has a relaxing effect. Both drugs trigger chemical tolerance, which requires higher quantities of the drug to be used each time to achieve the same intensity of effect.

Pornography, by both arousing (the “high” effect via dopamine) and causing an orgasm (the “release” effect via opiates), is a type of polydrug that triggers both types of addictive brain chemicals in one punch, enhancing its addictive propensity.



But, Bennett says, “internet pornography does *more* than just spike the level of dopamine in the brain for a pleasure sensation. It literally *changes the physical matter* within the brain so that new neurological pathways *require* pornographic material in order to trigger the desired reward sensation.”

Think of the brain as a forest where trails are worn down by hikers who walk along the same path over and over again, day after day.

⁴ Article take from <http://www.desiringgod.org/>

The exposure to pornographic images creates similar neural pathways that, over time, become more and more “well-paved” as they are repeatedly traveled with each exposure to pornography. Those neurological pathways eventually become *the* trail in the brain’s forest by which sexual interactions are routed. Thus, a pornography user has “unknowingly created a neurological circuit” that makes his or her default perspective toward sexual matters ruled by the norms and expectations of pornography.

Not only do these addictive pathways cause us to filter all sexual stimulation through the pornographic filter; they awaken craving for “more *novel* pornographic content like more taboo sexual acts, child pornography, or sadomasochistic pornography.” And it gets worse:

Another aspect of pornography addiction that surpasses the addictive and harmful characteristics of chemical substance abuse is its *permanence*. While substances can be metabolized out of the body, pornographic images cannot be metabolized out of the brain because pornographic images are stored in the brain’s memory.

“In sum,” Bennett writes, “brain research confirms the critical fact that pornography is a drug delivery system that has a distinct and powerful effect upon the human brain and nervous system.”

None of this takes GOD by surprise. He designed the interplay between the brain and the soul. Discoveries of physical dimensions to spiritual reality do not nullify spiritual reality.

When Jesus said, “I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28), he saw with crystal clarity — the way a designer sees his invention — that the physical eye had profound effects on the spiritual “heart.”

And when the Old Testament wise man said in Proverbs 23:7, literally, “As he thinks in his soul, so is he,” he saw with similar clarity that soul acts create being. Thinking in the soul corresponds to “is.” And this “is” includes the body.

In other words, it goes both ways. Physical reality affects the heart. And the heart affects physical reality (the brain). Therefore, this horrific news from brain research about the enslaving power of pornography is not the last word. GOD has the last word. The Holy Spirit has the greatest power. We are not mere victims of our eyes and our brains. I know this both from Scripture and from experience. And I will write more about it next Tuesday.

Watching **Porn** Makes **Straight Men** More Receptive To The Idea Of **Same-Sex Marriage**⁵

- Effect was particularly marked in less-well educated men, researchers say.
- They believe porn may open men's minds to alternative sexual situations.
- Research has shown 30 per cent of all internet traffic is porn.

By Damien Gayle

PUBLISHED: 18:00 GMT, 4 February 2013

Same-sex marriage – heterosexual men warm to the idea of gay marriage more if they watch pornography.

Campaigners for same-sex marriage have always come up against particularly vociferous opposition from heterosexual men.



But a study from the U.S. has suggested a novel method of persuading them to soften their stance on the divisive issue: get them to watch dirty videos. The new academic analysis suggests that the more that straight men watch pornography, the more they warm to the idea that two people of the same sex could be married.

Paul Wright, assistant professor of communications at Indiana University and author of the study, said the effect was particularly marked in men who were less-well educated.

He said the change in attitude could be because pornography opens their mind to accepting non-traditional sexual situations – like those involving participants of the same sex.

“Our study suggests that the more heterosexual men, especially less educated heterosexual men, watch pornography, the more supportive they become of same-sex marriage,” he told the **Washington Examiner**.

⁵ Article taken from http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2273376/Watching-porn-makes-straight-men-receptive-idea-sex-marriage-new-study-claims.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490#axzz2JvU7v4th

He went on: “Pornography adopts an individualistic, non-judgmental stance on all kinds of non-traditional sexual behaviours and same-sex marriage attitudes are strongly linked to attitudes about same-sex sex. If people think individuals should be able to decide for themselves whether to have same-sex sex, they will also think that individuals should be able to decide for themselves whether to get married to a partner of the same-sex.”

Mind opening – the change in attitude could because of pornography opens the minds of men to accepting non-traditional sexual situations – like those involving participants of the same sex.

The results of the study, published in the journal Communication Research, could be interpreted as suggesting that backers of same sex marriage should encourage men to watch more port.

Professor Wright said: “Since a portion of individuals’ sexual attitudes come from the media they consume, it makes sense that pornography viewers would have more positive attitudes towards same-sex marriage.”

If figures on internet usage are correct, it is likely that support for same-sex marriage will be fairly strong worldwide – researchers last year revealed a staggering 30 per cent of all online traffic is pornography.

The biggest porn site on the web – Xvideos – receives 4.4 billion page views and 350 million unique visits per month, according to figures revealed last spring. The only sites that surpass this in size are the likes of Google and Facebook, according to an investigation carried out by ExtremeTech. The report uncovered the viewing figures for Xvideos from Google’s DoubleClick Ad Planner, which uses cookies to gather information about users.

It then used these figures – and actual data from the third biggest porn site, YouPorn – to extrapolate how much data is being transferred out of the site’s servers.

It based the first calculation on the average length of time spent on Xvideos, which is 15 minutes, and assumed a low resolution video was being streamed. From this it estimated that around 29 petabytes of pornography is being transferred a month, or 50 gigabytes per second. However, it upped this estimate to 35 to 40PB per month after learning that YouPorn hosts over 100TB of porn, gets 100 million page views and transfers 950 terabytes per day.



For the latest study, Professor Wright and study co-author Ashley Randall, of the University of Arizona, looked at data from studies of 500 heterosexual men over the past five years funded by the National Science Foundation. "Pornography consumption did predict over-time increases in support for same-sex marriage," they wrote.

MEN WHO LOOK AT PORN "DAMAGE PARTNER'S SELF-CONFIDENCE"

It may make them more liberal and accepting in their attitudes towards gay marriage, but research shows that men who look at porn are making their partners miserable.

A study found that when their partners turn to X-rated films for pleasure it had a corrosive effect on a woman's self confidence.

Women's sex lives were also damaged if their partners preferred virtual ways of arousing himself instead of sleeping with them.

Destin Stewart, a clinical psychology intern at the University of Florida, looked at the problem after one of her patients explained she was having difficulty with her porn-addicted partner. She asked 308 students aged 18 to 29 and asked them to complete online questionnaires about how often their partners viewed porn.

They were also asked about how sexually satisfied they were, how much self-esteem they had and how they rated the quality of their relationship. All the women were heterosexual.

The results showed a strong statistical link between men viewing porn and women becoming unhappy. When women thought that their partner was a heavy porn user or a porn addict it also had a negative impact on their self-esteem and general sexual satisfaction.

Ms. Stewart said that the key to solving the issue was to get couples to talk frankly about what they wanted, even though it can be tough. She said: "It's just about trying to do some education about what is realistic and unrealistic and trying to get couples to be honest about what their wants and needs and desires are".

Additional Resources

Please be sure to work through all the books in the *“Healing The Sexually Broken-Hearted”* series:

- BOOK 1 is now J2F Book 8 (be sure to work through this book first)
- BOOK 2: Dealing With Sexual Addictions
- BOOK 3: Restoring Sexual Identity: I Am A Man!
- Sodomy And Sexual Abuse
- Harlotry And Idolatry
- Spiritual Warfare For Sexual Sin
- Restoring Your Sexuality
- Sexuality, Ages 13-18
- “Healing The Sexually Broken Hearted” DVD Series

As well as our foundational series, *“Journey2Freedom”*:

- J2F1 Man’s Purpose And The Gifts Of The Spirit
- J2F2 Generational Blessings
- J2F3 Blessings And Curses Over Motherhood
- J2F4 Water/Spirit Baptism
- J2F5 Spying Out The Land
- J2F6 Dealing With The Giants
- J2F7 Uprooting Generational Heart-Attitudes And Roots
- J2F8 Childhood Pain, The Brain, And Arrested Development ... How Do We HEAL And Come To MATURITY?
- J2F9 Mother-Bonds, Deception, And The False Prophetic

As well as our follow-on series, *“Journey2Wholeness”*, which covers:

- Healing from the curse of illegitimacy and shame.
- Understanding the mind-body-emotions connection.
- Dating, courtship, sexuality, and GOD’s Plan for marriage.
- Trauma, childhood, and arrested development.
- Understanding the conscious and subconscious mind, and mind renewal ... healing from un-Godly lies/beliefs from childhood (Life Commandments).
- As well as understanding/dealing with anger, forgiveness, and grief.

PRIESTLY BLESSING

Numbers 6:24-26

“Y’varekh’kha YHVH v’yishmerekha.
May YHVH bless you and keep you.

Ya’er YHVH panav eleikha vichunekka.
May YHVH make His Face shine on you and show you His favour.

Yissa YHVH panav eleikha v’yasem l’kha shalom.
May YHVH lift up His Face toward you and give you peace.

In this way they are to put My Name on the people of Israel, so that I will bless them.

