



## Recovery From Internet Pornography

### Coming Clean: Breaking the Bonds of Internet Pornography

What can you do if you or a loved one has become addicted to the counterfeit intimacy of Internet pornography? There are several steps.

#### **If you're the person with the problem:**

**Own it.** Admit you have a problem. It's eroding your relationship with God and, if you're married, with your spouse. You've undoubtedly tried to stop and you can't. It's time to admit you're no longer controlling this habit; it's controlling you.

**Confess it.** James 5:16 says that healing begins with confession. Tell your spouse about your problem; she has a right to know.

**Get help.** The longer you put off getting help, the more damaging the consequences for you and your family. Call a Christian counselor in your area specializing in addictive and compulsive behavior. Become involved in a Christ-centered 12-step group for sexual addicts. Find a sponsor to work with you individually.

**Sanitize your environment.** Following are suggestions specific to Internet porn and to other forms of sexual addiction.

#### **Internet Pornography**

**Get off the Internet entirely** for a period of time to allow God to begin the process of restoring your mind. Some have failed so repeatedly in this area they can never again trust themselves on the Internet.

**Pray** Psalm 51 back to God as David did after his sexual sin.

**Install filtering software** on your computer.

**Lock up your hard drive** and give the key to your wife.

If you have Internet access at work, ask a supervisor to regularly check your computer records to see if you've accessed porn sites.

Other forms of Sexual Addiction (print pornography, adult bookstores, video stores, massage parlors, strip clubs, telephone sex, or prostitutes):

Don't ever frequent convenience stores where you purchased pornography.  
Change driving routes so you never drive near places of temptation.

Get rid of mementos, and phone numbers. Don't ever again read newspapers that advertise the sexual services you used.

Disconnect cable TV; take a break from all TV (especially prime-time shows based on sensuality; soap operas; and sports with cheerleaders).

### **On the road:**

Whenever possible, **don't travel alone.**

In hotels have HBO and adult shows **disconnected when you check in.**

**Don't go to meals with the opposite sex.**

**Don't be alone in a hotel room with the opposite sex.**

**Reject the quick fix.** Commit yourself to a long, thorough process of recovery. Those struggling with sexual sin have a wound underneath needing to be healed. We've seen many men quickly decide they're "all fixed," only to fall again because the root issues were not addressed.

### **If you're the spouse:**

**It's not about you.** Remember, it's not your fault that your spouse uses pornography. His behavior is about a broken place inside him.

**Draw a line in the sand.** Don't ignore his behavior; it will only get worse. Let him know gently but firmly that he must seek help. One pastor's wife we worked with tolerated and covered up her husband's pornography addiction for two years because she feared he'd lose his ministry. But those two years took a terrible toll on their marriage. And when his addiction came to light, the backlash from his church was much greater because he hadn't voluntarily sought help earlier.

**Seek support for yourself.** Resist the temptation to spiritualize or deny your pain. Find a counselor or a support group to help you deal with your hurt and anger. Undealt with, it will simply leak out later as resentment.

**Be supportive of your spouse's recovery.** But don't try to manage it. He needs another man to hold him accountable.

John, in his first epistle, tells us that when we confess our sin and turn from it, God cleanses us inside and deepens the fellowship between us (1 John 1:9). There's always hope when we come to the Lord in brokenness. But procrastinating only makes things worse. As Thomas Hobbes said, "Hell is truth seen too late."