

“HOW TO OVERCOME SEXUAL TEMPTATIONS”

→ Facts: 50% of all Christian men (and 20% of all Christian women) are addicted to pornography. 1 in 3 visitors to internet porn sites are women. 9 in 10 men struggle at some level with pornography.

→ **Pornography is serious and damaging!** (1) Men are naturally attracted to a woman's body. (2) This attraction is designed for marriage (1 Cor. 7:4). (3) Unfortunately, fashions have progressively exposed the female body; and many women have bought into the lie that the display of their bodies to men is innocent and self-empowering; and media has increasingly distorted sex and made it accessible to the world. (4) Sexual lust is never satisfied – it's a dragon that needs more and more to fill the thirst. (5) Wanting to stop – and even praying to stop – rarely result in actually stopping. (6) Sensual images have varying effects on men. They can trigger fantasies . . . obsession and addiction . . . or merely be an annoying – or desired – distraction to a man's mind.

→ **A man doesn't often understand** how relational the sexual union is. The woman has it right – sex and the sharing of male and female bodies is designed for marriage, not recreational personal pleasure. Unfortunately, the male mind is able to separate sex from relationship. So in his mind, he can have a fantasy world and still be loving and faithful to his wife. It's wrong, and his mind is deceived, but the reality is that he still does often love his wife – imperfectly for sure – but he still loves her. And that's a **hard message for her to hear**.

God's Way to Overcome Sexual Temptation and Sin

(See www.fredmillerglorifygod.com for a more biblically extensive outline.)

- Sex was created by God for four purposes: It's a physical union that symbolizes a committed relational union between a man and a woman; It's an intimate union that symbolizes the soul-intimacy that flows from a life of sacrificial love; It's a pleasurable union designed to assist a husband and wife in mutual love; and It's a procreative union designed to bring children into the world and care for them together.

▶ *Matthew 5:28* “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

- So to desire sexual excitement through looking at a woman – whether at work, the mall, at church or on a computer – is sin. It's selfish and unloving.
- Self-sex (masturbation) is a distortion; 99% of time accompanied by fantasy.
- Sexual sin makes you a slave to your passions – but anything that rules us or controls other than God is an idol. (1 Cor. 6:12-13, 20) *“Everything is permissible for me - but I will not be mastered by anything . . . The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord . . . You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.”* And 2 Peter 2:19 - *“for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.”* **What are you controlled by?**

1. **Confession.** Confess your sin – against God, others and yourself; admit that you've fallen short of God's intended glory for you.
2. **Surrender your heart to God.** It's not just freedom from the slavery of sexual sin, it's to want a new slavery – to God! It isn't about denying myself pleasure – it's actually pursuing my greatest pleasure – in God. (John 10:10;

John 15:11) Sexual sin is a worship disorder; we need a heart realignment. So pray, worship him, love him, serve him, delight in him; let me change you!

3. **Identify the heart issues that trigger your lust.** E.g. needing approval or respect; unfulfilled relational intimacy in marriage, or fearing intimacy; boredom; loneliness; anger; stress; fear of failure at work; an addiction to earthly pleasures in general. ▶ *Proverbs 4:23* “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” Sexual sin rarely stands in isolation from other issues. It's usually riding another horse into your heart.

4. **Renewal of your mind.** Romans 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Top four lies and the truths that correct them:

(1) “Sex is for my pleasure.” Truth: “God's purposes for sex are not for my private personal pleasure, but for marital love.”

(2) “I can think what I want as long as I don't touch.” Truth: “Desire is just as sinful as behavior if it's outside of marriage.”

(3) “Looking doesn't hurt anyone.” Truth: “It hurts the women I reduce to objects for my pleasure; it hurts me by separating sex from committed relationship, and putting a wall in my relationship with God; it hinders my marriage – and hurts my spouse *deeply* when they find out.”

(4) “I can't control myself.” Truth: “Sexual desire can be controlled. ▶ 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 – *“It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable.”*

▶ Romans 12:9 “Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” See clearly both the evil of sexual sin and the joy/beauty of purity.

5. **Fleeing from temptation.** ▶ 1 Corinthians 10:12 “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!” Sexual sin is a slippery slope – it's hard to put the brakes on. Don't play with fire. You must see yourself as weak – so you stay close to God, and run far from the sin.

- Identify and flee environmental triggers to sexual sin (or at least prepare your heart when you know you will be near them. (Particular stores, web sites, magazines, TV shows, romance novels, certain coworkers, being alone late at night with a computer, hotel videos, cell phone misuse, etc.)
- Install a porn filter on your computer
- Limit affectionate touching with women who are not your spouse, and don't flirt. Guard an emotional attachment to the opposite sex. “If you take care of how things look, you take care of how they are.”
- Bounce your eyes from people or images that are sexually attractive. Don't linger. As Job said, “I made a covenant with my eyes to not look lustfully at a girl.” - Job 31:1
- Women: Please don't make our job as your brothers harder than it already is. Dress modestly! (1 Tim. 2:9) We want to be drawn to Jesus, not your bodies.

6. **Get support from a person of the same sex** who will help you fight well.

7. **An effective “Temptation Plan”** – 3-4 things you will do, as necessary, when you face temptation coming (e.g. Bowing your head in worship; reciting Scripture; taking a walk with God; praying for all the nonChristian people you know; identifying your common lie and reciting the truth.

. . . **These are beginning steps.** *Deepen your heart and mind through reading Christian literature. Do all for the glory of God! Live in the transforming love of Jesus!*