

A Five-Step Process for Overcoming Pornography

The need to address any addiction is urgent and critical for your spiritual life and marriage. In order to do this successfully, you will need to take a multi-pronged approach. The key areas are listed below, along with some specific action steps you can take. Feel free to add more, based on your specific situation, needs and advice from a counselor.

Most men who experience freedom in this area do so by taking their sin seriously, acting decisively, and involving others to help them make the right choices, and go through the process of repentance and “renewing their mind”.

1. Get Accountability & Godly Counsel

- Accountability Team
 - Recruit a team of Accountability Partner(s)
 - Tell them about your involvement with pornography and ask them to help
 - Share with them your desire to be pure. Write out specific goals/steps you will take to reach them
 - Update them regularly on your progress and setbacks
 - Seek their guidance and discuss any corrections necessary
- Counseling (especially if you have signs of addiction or have a personal history of abuse)
 - Uncover sources of underlying emotional pain/anger and address that

Why? Satan’s approach thrives in darkness and secrecy. When you bring your problem out in the open with your accountability team, it lessens its grip on your life. Don’t let your private struggle stay private. Build a support team to support and hold you accountable. You don’t have to face this challenge alone.

“I have never met anyone who has experienced sexual-addiction recovery alone.” ~An Addiction Counselor

2. Confess & Invest

- *Confess* this sin to God, and then to your wife
 - Get guidance from your counselor (or accountability partner)
 - Share what you have been doing with pornography, and now commit to turning from
 - Explain the steps you are committing to, in order to gain victory over this sinful addiction.
 - Accept the response of your mate & be understanding. This may take time, so give it to her.
 - *“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.”* (Psalm 51:2)
- *Invest* in Your Marriage
 - Work on rebuilding your marriage
 - Attend a marriage class or conference annually
 - Build relationships with couples who affirm marriage

Why? Your wife needs to know what’s been going on in your life but you may not need to go into all the details of your lustful thoughts. Enlist her as a “high level” accountability and prayer partner. Don’t be surprised if she gets angry and/or sad. Assure her of your love, and give her time and space. This is your problem and responsibility; not hers.

Share with her the situations that are most tempting for you, and ask her to both encourage you and periodically check in to see how you are doing. The gory details of your struggle are to be shared with your male Accountability Team, with honesty.

3. Reinforce Your Spiritual & Physical Life

- Fill your mind with the superior promises and pleasure of Jesus.
- Focus on growing more like Jesus
- Learn to recognize Satan’s “addictive voice” (any thought or feeling of continued illicit sexual activity)
- Quickly confess any failings to your accountability team
- Spend daily time in prayer, Bible reading, worship
- Get involved at Church and in a small group
- Get enough exercise, rest and nourishment for your body, on a daily basis.

Why? Often, men struggling with pornography focus on becoming unlike the devil rather than like Christ. It is important to "take off" the sinful garment, but Scripture encourages us to focus on "putting on" the new garment - the virtues of Christ. Work from the inside, out. "Let those who love the Lord, hate evil." Psalm 97:10

Ultimately, victory over pornography will be enhanced when a person doesn't just focus on overcoming lust, but on becoming like Christ in all their attitudes and actions.

4. Remove Sources of Temptation

- *"Make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."* (Romans 13:14)
- The goal here is complete abstinence from any illicit, sexually related materials
- Get an Internet filter for your computer, and put your computer and TV in plain view
- Get rid of cable TV channels like HBO, Pay-per-view, etc.
- If you're serious about gaining victory, cancel subscriptions to magazines with suggestive content, even the "soft" stuff (e.g. Maxim, Men's Health)
- Be proactive with upcoming situations that are likely to put you in the "temptation zone" (e.g. business trips)

Why? A man's inclination to use porn can build from "little" compromises that set him up for a bigger fall. Personal discipline can be difficult, but remember, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11) Isn't that what you really want in your life?

5. Develop the Habit of Personal Removal from Tempting Situations

- Learn to recognize the "zone" leading up to temptation
 - BLAST (Bored, Lonely, Angry, Stressed or Tired)
 - Others include isolation without accountability, poor choices re. movies, TV, magazines, etc.
- Apply the "one & one" rule
 - One look, one second and then turn your eyes away and fill your mind with pure thoughts
 - "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." ~John Owen

Why? Create a safety zone for yourself, in order to reduce the pull of temptation, and provide a way of escape. Don't wait until it's too late. What you desire to do in a rational, un-aroused state won't easily translate into sustained behavior change while you are in an excited or aroused state.

If you follow this plan, you will be well on your way to gaining victory over the addictive grip of pornography and sexual sin. There may be some setbacks along the way, but keep connected to God, your wife and your Accountability Team, and don't give up!

Blessings!

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