

Family Legacy Institute

Tools For Families Building Godly Legacies

The Road To Wholeness

By Dr. John Splinter

Gene never dreamed he'd consider suicide. A three sport high school letter athlete, Division One sports scholarship jock and excellent student, Gene was a leader with a bright future. He was good looking, dated whomever he wished and was very popular. But he had one weakness ~ when he was 9 years of age an older brother had introduced him to pornography. By the time he was 20, Gene was using pornography on a daily basis, had dabbled into child porn, and found beastiality "interesting."

He had found it difficult to make meaningful relationships with girls he dated. Always on the hunt for something more ~ something different ~ a date without sex was a waste of time. But sometimes in his dorm room after a particularly frisky date he wept ~ lonely ~ empty ~ unaware of how to fill the emptiness. He finally "came to his senses" and recognized he needed help after pouring cyanide into a glass of water ~ poison stolen from chemistry lab ~ and was half way through writing a suicide note when images of his kid sister, weeping, devastated at his funeral, brought him out of his death-reverie. The next morning he called his pastor and asked for help.

When people finally "come to their senses" like the Prodigal Son (Luke chapter 15), and wish to be free of porn, they are often so emotionally and physically hooked that breaking their dependency is about as realistic as jumping to the moon. They have likely tried to stop many times. Therapists today say that porn addiction is more difficult to break than addiction to cocaine or heroin. Having written about this elsewhere (see *Five Components of Porn Addiction*, also *The Spiritual Side of Porn Addiction*, and *Breaking Chains*), this article will focus upon how to go about breaking the coiled Anaconda that pornography becomes as it crushes the bones of emotional health and squeezes the breath of character out of its victims ~ and how to "come home again to God."

Before diving into this article, some readers may benefit by knowing something about addiction. The more addicted we are, the more we tend to seek quick answers. This being so, you may already feel bored with reading this, and you may be tempted to do the Cliff Notes version by browsing the headers and paragraph titles, and then assume you know the material. If that's your style, then go for it. You'll be back to the same point in a year, or five. Part of what needs to happen in your life is that you slow down your pace. So chill, kick back, and do some reading.

Three To Five Year Recovery

Everyone is different. No two people bring the same levels of resilience. Breaking free from porn ownership can be of varying timelines. There are a few significant variables that often make a difference in the length of time it takes for a person to get free of porn ownership.

Perhaps the most important of these is the level of emotional strength (or lack of) that one brings from their family of origin. A second variable involves one's spiritual health, because above all else, porn addiction is a spiritual issue. The third variable is a bit more difficult to understand. It involves one's general personal level of "resilience" ~ one's ability to bounce back after failure ~ one's ability to turn lemons into lemonade ~ one's internal chutzpa.

However all things considered, experts in the recovery field recognize that getting free from porn and its residual effects in the brain, is generally a three-to-five year process. The good news is that it is indeed possible. The bad news is that it's not likely something one can just snap out of. The rest of this article will be about the good news, and how to do it.

Four Lies That Lead Us Away From Home

To begin the journey toward wholeness, one must begin by understanding how one got lost in the first place. The pathway in either direction is spiritual ~ *not* religious ~ *spiritual*. We get lost when we start listening to the lies whispered by the Enemy of God, and we drift away from God's plan. Here's a brief review of some of Satan's most widely experienced lies. The story begins in the Garden of Eden. Satan is whispering to Eve, through the mouth of a snake. Here's the text:

Genesis 3:1-12 ~ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

LIE #1: You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

LIE #2: For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened,

LIE #3: and you will be like God,

LIE #4: knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" 10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." 11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." NIV

Let's look at the lies one at a time, for understanding them is the first step toward your healing.

LIE #1: ***"You will not die."*** There are a lot of ways to die. One of them is physical, as in ten-toes-up. But a lot of people live lives of emotional death as well. For example, something precious dies inside a woman when she's raped. Something also dies in the soul of the rapist. Something precious dies in the soul of the child being used for child porn movies. Something also dies in the soul of the adult shooting the footage, and the person watching it. Something precious dies when a man looks at the nude picture of an air-brushed model ~ his understanding of real femininity and genuine sexuality will never be the same again.

Simply put, whenever we disobey God in any way, something precious dies inside us. Our innocence is clouded. Our virtue is eroded. Our character is wounded. Our moral strength is weakened. Part of us dies on the inside. This death may start out with sexual stuff, but it always leaks into other areas of our lives as well.

Adam and Eve didn't die right there on the spot when they ate of the fruit from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But they *did* die, and needlessly so. Furthermore, their spousal relationship was tarnished: They were no longer comfortable being naked with each other ~ they covered up. And in that moment, God became a Being to be feared and hidden from rather than enjoyed and sought. Further, because sin is always a dynamic influence, their sin leaked into the lives of their kids, one of whom murdered his own brother. So much for Satan's integrity.

LIE #2: ***5 " God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened..."***

There actually two lies in this verse. The first is implied, the second is overt. The implied lie is that God is holding out on us, by withholding the joys of sin. When I was a (stupid, immature) kid, a friend of mine and I joked about the lines of an old hymn. The first verse began, "I was sinking deep in sin." After the word "sin," my friend and I added the word, "Wheeeeeee!" The truth is that God loves us so deeply that He would never withhold anything from us that was good for us. But His great Enemy wants us to believe the opposite.

So the Playboy pinup is a lie. She doesn't love you. She isn't turned on to you. She's just a pawn in a loser's game. She's being used to chill your soul, turn you away from God, and to ruin your ability to honestly love your wife ~ or if you're single, your future wife. Single or married, she's being used to burn a false image of sexuality and desire into your brain so that you become unable to understand and enjoy sexual reality.

The second and overt lie in this verse is that our "eyes will be opened." That's a metaphor for gaining insight. There's a problem with gaining insight about evil: The very knowledge itself is destructive. During the Second World War, the Nazis experimented with ways of murdering Jews. In one experiment, they lined up 15 living Jews in a perfect row, and then shot a Mauser rifle bullet through the lined-up heads. They wanted to gain insight into how many skulls and brains a Mauser shell would penetrate before losing its killing power. Some knowledge is, in and of itself, destructive.

Satan wants to “open our eyes” to things that are destructive in God’s eyes. Satan wishes to draw our focus to his agenda ~ an agenda that *leads us away from* our loving Father. His most effective mental and visual bullet, is human sexuality. Look back at the story of Adam and Eve for a moment. In verse ten, Adam said, ***“I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”*** This was before God had said anything about nakedness. For some reason Adam and Eve needed to cover their nakedness and hide from God after they sinned. Sin makes us need to cover up and hide ~ it drives us away from God. Satan knows that, and so he uses sex to drive people like rented mules ~ away from God.

Friend, you don’t *want* your “eyes to be opened” to junk that drives you away from your Father in Heaven. Home is where you want to be. It’s dark out there where Satan lives. Scripture says that Satan presents himself as an angel of light ~ and it’s not hard to see that notion as he tosses the lure of naked beautiful women (or men) into the pond ~ “come nibble little fishes, you’ll like it a lot ~ I’m your best friend.” Of course, lures always have barbed hooks that make them impossible to spit out once the painful reality of the lure hits home.

LIE #3: “You will be like God...”

This is lie numero uno ~ the BIG Kahuna. Unless our lives are protected and regulated by Christ, we are all complete suckers for power. Satan lures us toward abuse of power, and he uses sexuality to do it. OK, let’s play with this one for a moment. There she is – on the Internet. She’s drop dead gorgeous, buck naked, and she wants you. In your mind you can make her do or say *anything*. You have absolute power over her. In this moment you are like God – she can’t resist you. Whatever you can imagine, she does – perfectly.

Back to reality. Unfortunately, she’s a picture, not a real person. You don’t *really* have all that power over her. You’re just a schmuck to her. There isn’t any real attachment between you and her. Never will be. She’s just a pawn in the hands of an evil force that wishes to ruin your life – rip and bend your understanding of sexuality – destroy the marvelous bond of being “one flesh” with one person – alienate you from your wife, and from God. That’s a reality that Satan never talks about.

Fact is, none of us will ever be like God, especially by trying to pull in the opposite direction. That very activity was what drove Satan out of heaven in the first place. All anyone can ever gain, by pulling away from God, is some understanding of hell ~ whether while living on the earth, or after death. Pornography does not make a person powerful. It makes us weak and it enslaves us. It destroys our characters, relationships, self-respect, and faith.

LIE #4: “...knowing good and evil.”

It sounds balanced, right? To “know good and evil” sounds like Fox News ~ fair and balanced. To interpret this lie, just ponder the difference between academic knowledge vs. first-hand experience with a subject. For example, academically you know that if you stick a pin in your eye, it’ll cause pain and you may lose your eyesight. Experiential knowledge comes about when you actually stick the pin in your eye.

In this fourth lie, Satan is saying that experiential knowledge is the key to being like God. What he fails to point out is that experiential knowledge of evil always brings ownership. Here are

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some extreme examples to demonstrate this principle: In the last ten years of his life, Adolph Hitler had no understanding of, or ability to do, good. He was totally consumed by power and evil, and it cost tens of millions of people their lives. At some point in his life, Joseph Stalin completely lost his ability to understand and do good. He may have killed more people than Hitler.

Ed Gein did unspeakable things to human cadavers after he murdered their victims. He completely lost his ability to “know good and evil,” as he became totally controlled by evil. Ted Bundy killed and raped more than 35 women. He “knew evil” experientially, and it took him to places he would never have thought he’d go.

This is why the sexually addictive cycle leads to ever-greater pathology. The more we yield ourselves to evil, the more it owns us. In the addictive cycle we see the ever expanding power of evil taking the person to deeper and darker places as the person loses their ability to do anything but greater evil. That’s why child pornography, rape and even bestiality begin to make sense to some people who started out dabbling with soft porn.

To “know evil” is to be controlled by it. It’s not an academic or “fair and balanced” thing. It is spiritual. To “know evil” puts a person into the controlling grip of the master of evil. To “know” pornography is to be controlled by it. It is to have images neuro-chemically burned into our brains in a manner that we cannot erase them. It is to create a neuro-chemical dependence upon further sin. Satan didn’t mention that part to Adam.

The Road Back Home

The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 is fantastic in that as the wayward boy turned down the road toward home, his dad saw him, had pity on him, ran to him, embraced him, and then threw a party. I can’t read that part of the Bible any longer without getting teary. But for the person hooked on sex, there’s a question that must be understood on the way back home. The question is “why did the boy leave in the first place?” Without answering that question, he’s still vulnerable to leave again.

In the field of counseling we understand that people are most susceptible to addictions of all kinds, after being psychologically wounded themselves, and then leaving those wounds untended for a few years. The sources of wounds are too myriad to begin listing. However it may happen, a child is emotionally wounded, the wounds are untended, and the child grows up carrying hurt and probably rejection. This child is now “ripe” for something, anything, that can help him/her feel better.

Along comes Satan and says, “Do I ever have solution for you! Just look at these pictures, then masturbate and have an orgasm, and presto! You’ll feel better!!” Satan doesn’t finish the thought, however ~ because if he did, the last half of the thought would be, “...you’ll feel better *until* the emptiness and feelings of rejection emerge again (and they will), and then you’ll have to repeat the same cycle ~ and then again ~ and again ~ and then I own you, bucko.”

Not everyone who gets hooked on sex comes from a painful childhood. Some come from normal and happy homes. But the spiritual task of leading a person into sexual addiction is made a lot easier for the Enemy of God, when a child comes from childhood or adolescence having been emotionally hurt and thereby experiencing some sense of rejection. (*For further reading see, "Emotional Triggers And Sexuality" ~ by Splinter ~ available at www.family-legacy-institute.com*).

Either way, as the Prodigal Son walked home, he needed to ask himself why leaving home made sense in the first place. That's a key question to ponder....., for you. How did Satan lead you to believing that pornography plus masturbation was a better source of comfort, than resolving the loneliness, anger, hurt, and rejection of your childhood or adolescence? Now let's read the story.

Luke 15:11-24

"A man had two sons. 12 The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

13 "A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money on wild living. 14 About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. 15 He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. 16 The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

17 "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! 18 I will go home to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, 19 and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man.' "

20 "So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. 21 His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'

22 "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet. 23 And kill the calf we have been fattening in the pen. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' " NLT

Can you feel the love of Dad? Can you see him running to you? Can you feel his arms around you, his head on your shoulder ~ his hot tears washing down your neck as he convulsively sobs in joy. Did you ever think of God like that? Did you ever think that God was telling *His own story* about His love for you, when Christ told that Parable? If not, then you've missed the heart of your Father in Heaven.

The kid had blown 33% of Dad's money on parties and hookers. He had been hugely sexual by any definition of the word. And now his dad is tearfully rejoicing and throwing a party because his beloved child came back home. From a human perspective, God's grace often only makes sense to God Himself. A normal dad would more likely have done things a bit differently ~ lectures ~ payback. But the Dad in this story threw a party, because the story is about God's grace ~ the same grace He offers to you, incidentally.

The story of the Prodigal son is the culmination of a three-story series that Christ taught in Luke chapter 15. The first story was about a lost sheep; the second about a lost coin; the third about a lost son. Part way through the stories, Christ provided a thesis statement summing up the purpose of the stories when he said, ***"Heaven will be happier over one lost sinner who returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!" (Lk. 15:7 ~ NLT)*** God is happier about people like you and me "coming home again," than He is regarding all the other nice people who never left. That's the moral of this parable.

Rebuilding Family Ties

There's a fascinating psychological phenomenon called the "Stockholm Syndrome," in which people who have been held hostage, actually express adulation and have positive feelings toward those who held them captive. It's not a far stretch to compare this paradoxical phenomenon to the love/hate relationship we all carry toward sin. If we truly hated our sin, it would be simple to overcome. The problem is that we eventually come to hate its control, but we still love the sin.

That's a bit like the Prodigal Son bringing a few of the pigs home with him so he could snack on the husks fed to them and lolly around in the mud with them ~ for old time's sake. OK, all analogies break down, but you get the picture.

Coming home for the Prodigal Son meant having a bath, getting all new clean duds, being given a ring, spanky new sandals, and some great veal cutlets. Whether in grateful response to his Dad's affection, or merely out of considered self-interest, the Prodigal Son undoubtedly got very active in rebuilding family ties, lest he wander away again. There's an old hymn written by a man named Robert Robinson in the year 1757, at age 22. Who knows what he was dealing with ~ well, he *was* a male, and at age 22 he *was* at the height of his hormonal curve when he wrote the words. Anyway, in the last verse of his song he ponders God's grace, as contrasted with his tendency to go wandering off again:

*O to grace, how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.*

*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.*

☛ Notice these two
☛ lines especially.

In his heart-ripping Psalm of confession and repentance, after adultery and murder, ancient King David wrote “homecoming” thoughts. Here are the first few phrases:

*Have mercy on me, O God,
because of your unfailing love.
Because of your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my sins.
Wash me clean from my guilt.
Purify me from my sin. (Ps. 51:1-2 ~ NLT)*

Homecoming means being genuinely aware of our weakness, and genuinely sad about our sinful ways. In the story of the Prodigal Son, just after his Dad had grabbed and kissed him, the boy said, ***“Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.”*** Humility and confession is the right place to start. If we’re truly contrite and humble, it’s as if God’s next move is to look beyond our sin and start calling for a celebration! The words of yet another hymn say, *“He looked beyond my fault, and saw my need.”*

Apparently, according to scripture, there’s no “out behind the wood pile” session with our Father when we come home. There’s no, “I told you so,” or 20 lashes with Dad’s belt. We may feel as if we deserve punishment, and in fact we do. But our Father’s love is such that He’s just glad we’re home again. He desires that we take our place at the family table and enjoy the fellowship of hearth and home.

Safety Straps

A few years ago I bungee-jumped off a 200’ crane. Let me tell you about bungee-jumping. You want to be really, really, really sure the safety straps are tight and tied around your ankles ~ because if they aren’t, all the King’s horses and all the King’s men aren’t going to put Johnny together again.

Safety straps are good things. Our loving Father provides some really good safety straps for Prodigal Sons (and Daughters). Here are a few:

- **Get to know Dad**

He has revealed Himself in the Bible. So read up. Not because you’re “religious” but because you have no intention of going back to the pigs. Just getting to know God is a safety strap. And God actually strengthens us when we read His Word. It’s like magic. OK, it’s really the work of God’s Holy Spirit in us (but it’s still like magic). Start reading in the book of Psalms. Here are some really neat verses demonstrating our Father’s mercy toward us after we totally screw up:

- Psalm 25:7,11
- Psalm 32:1-2, 5
- Psalm 34:22
- Psalm 51:17
- Psalm 85:2-3

- Psalm 86:5
- Psalm 103:8-12

There was a time in my own life when I came face to face with the man in the mirror, and hated what I saw. Sometimes we don't recognize how ugly we have become until circumstances put the mirror to us and we are faced with our own characters. In that moment I asked some hard questions of myself, and the answers were unnerving. So I started from scratch ~ read through the whole Bible and used a green gel pen to highlight everything the Bible said about God. It was one of the best things I ever did. Among other things I learned about the Father's character – a character of loving-kindness. One of the best safety straps ever, is learning about God by reading His Word. The more one can make it a daily thing, the more enriching it is.

- **Learn to worship Him**

Porn is actually a form of worship, believe it or not. We yield our souls to the images we see, and we act out our passions. That's worship. So another safety strap is to replace worship of porn, with worship of God. Some ways to worship include:

- **Prayer** – just talking to Him, and learning to sense the voice of His Spirit. Prayer is like diving into a lake in the hot summer and feeling the thermal layers as we slip into deeper water. It gets better as we go deeper.
- **Meditation** – taking one verse from the Bible and pondering it for a while (no lotus position needed). Meditation is like sucking on toffee – it dissolves slowly and the flavor lasts for a long time.
- **Singing praise songs** – there have to be ten jillion of them now, so learn a few and make them “your” songs of praise to your Father.
- **Enjoying His creation** – some people like to get out into nature and experience our Father's creation as a form of worship

- **Hang out with the family**

Some people go to church to get their cards punched, and that's about it. And some people who call themselves Christians are merely religious phonys. But most churches have some people who really love the Lord, and really want to please Him. Those are good people to get to know and to copy. Nobody's perfect, but real Christ-followers are not hard to spot. Look for the “fruit” (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control). It's a dead give-away. Hanging out with the family is a good safety strap. I personally have always loved to be close to a few of the oldsters, folks who have walked with God for 70 or 80 years and are pretty soon going to be in His presence. They bring a richness to the table.

- **Aim at pleasing your Father**

Believe it or not, simple obedience to God is a form of worship. It demonstrates respect for Him. A good goal is to live your life so that it's pleasing to Him in every way you can figure. You're never going to be perfect, but the closer you can stay to Father, and the more you try to be like his Son, Jesus Christ, the more peace and happiness He will put on you. Don't worry about tripping up. Imagine watching your 11-month-old child learning to walk. You get on your knees by the couch, hold out your arms, and say, “Come to me, sweetheart!” Your baby smiles and

then takes a couple of faltering steps ~ and then plops down on his diapered bottom. Do you yell, “No! Wrong! Stupid! Not like that!” Of course not ~ nor does your Father in heaven.

In fact, it’s pleasing to any parent that their child tried to walk, even if the child failed. Just as it’s pleasing to the heart of a parent when their child honestly tries to please them, so it is pleasing to God when we aim our lives at pleasing Him. And when we fail, He’s there to pick us up, pat us on the backside, and aim us in the right direction again.

If we *intentionally* fail, then God’s pretty good at getting our attention. But if we trip up while desiring to please Him, He’s expert at dusting us off and helping us to start walking again. Aiming your life to please your Father is a very good safety strap.

- **Burn all the bad old bridges**

Anything that leads you back toward porn is your enemy. It’s not your friend. Remember, Satan parades as an angel of light, but he only throws barbed hooks. Don’t buy his story any more. If you have a stash of porn, put it into the fireplace, burn it, and pray for God’s healing as the flames destroy it. If the Internet is your source, then ask your wife to put a password on your computer and only use it when she’s in the room. Use a porn blocker like Covenant Eyes or Safe Eyes. Erase all your porn files. You get the picture – burn all the bad old bridges.

- **Get counseling if you can’t stop your porn habit**

Porn addiction often points at early childhood wounds that only a trained counselor can help one deal with. There’s nothing mystical about therapy. It’s often hard emotional work, but it’s great for clearing away cobwebs and for gaining insight into how the Prodigal Child got lost in the first place. If you’re stuck, get help. There’s nothing “manly” about white knuckling and saying, “I can whip this by myself,” for the 20th time, or the 200th time. That approach is called denial, actually. There’s nothing unmanly about counseling. To the contrary, counseling takes bigger shoulders than white knuckling.

You need to learn about how the child got lost. You need to learn how your own brokenness is the seed for your porn addiction. You need to learn about your triggers, and about how behavior is sometimes amazingly symbolic. There’s a lot that a good therapist can help you with, and there’s no better place to learn than from a solid counselor.

One tip about counseling – look for Christian counseling. You don’t want a post modern moon-bat saying things like, “So..., you’re a serial rapist, well that’s OK if it’s what you really want.” You want someone who knows Christ and has rock-ribbed values. Work *only* with a licensed therapist who has *additional training* in dealing with sexual addiction issues. Other counselors may mean well, but they may not have the tools to help you get to wholeness. Before you start working with them, ask point blank, “Do you have additional training dealing specifically with sexual addiction issues?” Most graduate school programs don’t offer sexual addiction recovery training in their masters or Ph.D. courses. It takes additional post-graduate training to become trained in this subject area.

- **Open up with same-sex friends**

Most men play the John Wayne role when it comes to revealing their sexual weakness. They squint, tighten their jaw, and say, “Well, sure, I guess most guys have seen a Playboy here and there, so what’s your issue, pardner?” It takes shoulders for a man to say, “I can’t stop looking at porn and masturbating.” That’s why you need other guys in the ring with you – not to combat, but to encourage and support.

It’s called “accountability.” Your wife should *not* be your accountability partner. That changes the relationship from one of love, to one of supervision and challenge ~ *not* where you want to go with your wife. Rather, you want to find two or three other guys, preferably Christians who are mature enough to sustain confidentiality. You want to get together with them every week. When you’re together, you want to share both your progress and your failures each week. The Bible says, “**Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed (James 5:16 ~ NIV).**” That’s the format of your meetings – you share, they listen and encourage you, and then they pray for you. Remember when Adam and Eve sinned and then hid? Secrecy is one of Satan’s strongest chains. Confession and accountability are excellent bolt-cutters, breaking the power of secrecy.

At some point you will be freed and healed enough to say in front of a crowd, “I used to be hooked on porn, but God has freed and healed me. And if He can help me, He can help you too.” By that time the shame will be far in the rear view mirror of your life, and the strength and joy of the Lord will be so real ~ and your experience of His grace will be so powerful ~ that it’ll be easy to talk about. You’ll know the “path to home,” so you can lead other brother-slaves to freedom. Confession and accountability are two absolutely essential safety straps.

- **A final safety strap**

If you’re married, you have likely done some damage to your marriage by your porn use. You may have communicated that your wife isn’t much of a woman ~ or her figure isn’t what you need ~ or her sex drive is inadequate ~ or said some other hurtful things. You have probably drunk some of Satan’s cool-aid in regard to what sex is supposed to be (from his perspective). This being so, you would do your wife and yourself a favor by getting into marriage therapy as a couple, for a month or two.

Nothing that we break in marriage is irreparable in God’s grace, but sometimes it takes a trained person to help put the pieces back together. Again, seek a Christian therapist so that you know they have a value system and not just a lot of clinical training. Marriage therapy is like investing in the future of your marriage.

Final Thought

People who write songs usually have a reason behind each song. *Something* moved them to write the lyrics. We don’t know why Charles Wesley wrote the song, “Oh For A Thousand Tongues,” published in 1780. But one of the stanzas speaks to the praise and hope of freedom from sin’s ownership that Christ accomplished on our behalf.

*He breaks the power of canceled sin;
He sets the prisoner free.*

*His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood avails for me.*

What does “*breaks the power*” mean in your life? What does “*sets the prisoner free*” mean to you? You may feel guilty and stained, but you are probably not “*the foulest*,” person who ever lived. Yet even if you were, this hymn says Christ’s sacrifice is enough to clean even you. What would it feel like to be cleaned, and freed?

Just before diving off the 200’ crane on that bungee jump, the last thing we did was to check the safety straps, making sure they were very tight and secure. As you come home and collapse into the waiting arms of your loving Father, strap on your safety straps and stay close to your Father.

Processing These Thoughts

Here are nine quick questions aimed at leading your mind to process the material in this article. You will forget most of what you don’t process, within 48 hours. So do yourself a favor and do some processing.

1. In light of the discussion of Satan’s lies (pp. 3-4) what are some of the lies Satan has whispered to you?

2. How do you respond to God’s apparent love for a wayward son, as you read the story of the Prodigal Son? Is that story jus a nice story, or can you connect with a loving Father?

3. In the various Psalms verses given on page eight, choose three that are especially meaningful to you, and write why they’re meaningful.

4. Name three or four practical ways in which you personally can worship God.

5. In the hymn quoted on page eleven, what does the phrase, “breaks the power” mean in your life?

6. What does “sets the prisoner free” (same hymn) mean to you?

7. If you woke up tomorrow morning, free from porn and sex addiction, what would be the first thing you’d notice as being different?

8. First John 1:9 is a cool verse. It says, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness*” (NIV). Speculate as to what it might feel like to be completely cleansed and free.

9. Go back to your answer to item seven above. Do you think it may be worth praying that God may grant you that change? Do you know what the Bible says about approaching God with our issues? Here’s what it says: Heb 11:6 ~ “Anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (NIV) Do you fit those two criteria? If so, then pray😊.