

How to Deal with Your Sexual Addiction pornography, cybersex, phone sex, masturbation, etc.



See this page in: [Dutch](#), [Spanish](#)



Thousands of [e-mails](#) come to us from men and women of all walks of life who struggle with addictions to pornography, masturbation, cybersex, and similar sexual practices. We have seen many lives and families devastated by addictive sexual sins. These problems are not unique to any race, financial, social or marital status—Christian or non-Christian. If you suspect that you may have such an addiction, see our article, [How can I tell if I'm getting addicted to sex or pornography?](#), and our Web site, [Sex, Love & Relationships](#) which includes stories of many people who have struggled with these issues.

Often, those who contact us have told no one else about their problem. They suffer in silence. If you are such a person, [please contact us](#). Don't ignore the problem; it will only get worse and the damage will spread.

[If you find yourself engulfed in a sexual addiction, here are some general tips that have helped many in their journey toward restoration and healing:](#)

1. **Face the facts**

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" ([Romans 3:23](#)). There are [many ways](#) that we humans [sin](#) and fall short—lying, greed, stealing, adultery, taking the Lord's name in vain, and many other selfish acts. All sins are equally serious before our Holy God.

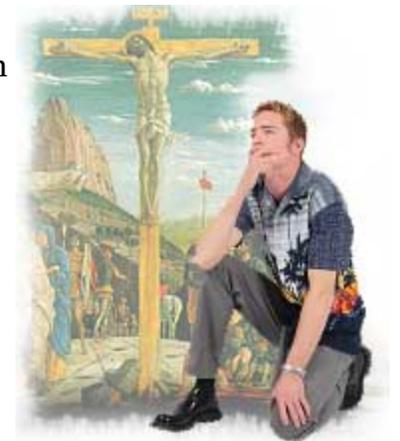
If there is some sexual sin in your life, the first step toward improvement is to understand and admit what you have done. If you have given yourself to pornography or sexual fantasies involving people other than your spouse, you have been committing **adultery**. Jesus said:

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (**Matthew 5:27-28**).

Grasp the seriousness of this. You have been breaking a commandment of God. You have turned something beautiful (sex), into something ugly, selfish and damaging. If you are married, then you have been unfaithful to your spouse. If single, you are sinning against the dear person you may one day marry. If you are returning to this behavior over and over again, despite your desire to stop, then you are out control. You are **addicted**. If this is the case, and you can admit it, then congratulations; you have taken the first step toward recovery.

2. **Spiritual salvation**

The single biggest factor in combatting such an addiction is to come under the authority of Jesus Christ. You are involved in a spiritual battle. "The Scripture contains no promise of help in overcoming temptation for those who are unsaved." If you are not yet a Christian, we strongly urge you to confess your sin and totally surrender your life to Him. Accept His gift of eternal salvation for your soul. After accepting Christ, some are totally delivered from their addictions. (See our **helpful resource page**. Also, see: **How can I be sure of my salvation?**)



"But, I am saved" - If there is no doubt that you have already committed your life to Jesus Christ and are relying on His sin-covering blood for your salvation, then do not let your sin cause you to doubt your salvation. Instead, deal with your sin. Confess it, and rededicate your life to Christ. Don't hold back any part of your life

from Him. Humble yourself totally before God. Surrender it all. Ask Him to help you live a life of purity and true love. Accept your own failure and inadequacy. Admit that you cannot overcome sin on your own.

The apostle Paul understood the frustration and terrible hold that our inherited sin has on all descendants of **Adam** and **Eve**:

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I **do** what I **do not want to do**, I agree that the law is good. ...I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

--Romans 7:15-24 (NIV)

3. Admit your weakness, seek God's help

All humans are selfish and sinful; it is our nature. Addiction to pornography and other sexual sins are particularly potent in their effect, similar to a seductive and powerful drug. Once it has a hold on you, it is very difficult to resist. In fact, it is virtually impossible to overcome on your own. You must have God's help.

God cannot work with you if you are still trying to overcome sin on your own; it is a form of pridefulness. You are, in effect, saying to God "I can take care of this myself." Consider these verses:

"The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God..." (Psalm 10:4).

"Pride goes before destruction..." (Proverbs 16:18). "When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom" (Proverbs 11:2).

"You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You" (Isa 26:3, NKJV).

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (I Peter 5:6-7).

You see, God's willingness to "exalt you" (lift you up spiritually) is dependent on your willingness to humble yourself before Him. But the second part is just as important: God cares for you so much that He is willing to take all of your cares (worries, anxieties, needs, fears, desires, challenges, regrets, etc.) upon Himself. In other words, humble yourself by accepting your inability to handle the cares of life and give them all over to God. THEN He will lift you up spiritually, and you will find peace and freedom unlike anything you've ever known.

The Holy Spirit will be the most powerful in your life, when you are the most humble—when you get your own interests and desires out of the way. Then, He can produce in you the fruit He promised: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Notice that last one—self control. It is important to see that self control is not simply a matter of one's will; it is, in fact, a fruit of the Holy Spirit working in us. What a merciful God we have! As we learn to depend more and more on God to see us through each day, and we become more aware of His presence moment by moment, we find that over time the magnet of sexual sin loses its strength.

4. Prayer power

Prayer is **conversation with our Creator**. It is a child's communion with his Father. The Bible emphasizes that it should have a very high priority in our lives. Continual prayer is very important to your recovery. If there was ever a time in your life when

you need to pray, it is now. It is the Christian's greatest weapon against the sin nature and the dangers and temptations of this world. "Anything of value in the kingdom of God is initiated in and dependent on prayer." Rely on God, and learn to think as He does. This will bring a revolution of good in your life.



Here's how to pray, each and every day...

a. Confess all known sin

Read: [Psalm 51](#) | [Mark 7:20-23](#) | [1 John 1:7-10](#)

b. Renounce conformity to the world

Read: [Romans 12:2, 6:13-14](#)

c. Ardently seek an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. He will give you a richer, more meaningful life.

Read: [John 10:10, 15:5-12](#) | [Ephesians 3:14-19](#) | [Philippians 3:10-14](#)

d. Offer your body as a "living sacrifice" to God

See: [Romans 12:1-2](#) | [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#)

e. Worship God

Read: [John 4:23-24](#) | [Philippians 3:3](#)

f. Thank and praise God. Thank Him for his grace and mercy, praise Him, and keep seeking His mercy. Thank God for answered prayer.

Read: [What should we thank God for, and how should we praise Him?](#) | [Thanksgiving, do the right thing](#) | [Are you thankful to God?](#) | [Philippians 4:6-7](#) | [Colossians 4:2](#)

g. Ask God for help in living a pure and loving life

See: [Philippians 4:6-7](#) | [Hebrews 4:16](#)

5. Reading and memorizing Scripture



Visit our on-line
Bible study

center

Memorizing scripture is an often overlooked weapon that should be in every Christian's arsenal. Memorize [James 1:14](#) and [1 Corinthians 10:13](#) and quote them when you are tempted.

Open your Bible at [Psalm 51](#) and make it your own prayer.

The following passages are also helpful in dealing with lust and sexual immorality:

[Matthew 5:27-30](#) | [1 Peter 2:11](#) | [Romans 8:13](#) | [Romans 6:12](#) | [1 Corinthians 6:13](#) | [Galatians 5:17](#) | [Philippians 4:8](#) | [2 Timothy 2:22](#) | [Psalm 101:2,3](#) | [Proverbs 6:25-29](#) | [Proverbs 5:18-20](#) | [Proverbs 8:13](#) | [Job 31:1-4](#) | [Matthew 5:8](#) | [Romans 8:6](#) | [1 Corinthians 6:9](#) | [1 Corinthians 6:18-19](#) | [2 Corinthians 10:5](#), [1 Thessalonians 4:3-5](#) | [James 1:15](#); [4:3](#) | [1 John 2:16](#)

Not only should Scripture memory be a regular part of your life as a Christian, reading the Bible regularly should as well. Read the Bible daily, without fail. We offer two plans that assist you in reading through the entire Bible: [One-Year Plan](#) / [Three-Year Plan](#).

6. Accountability

Although it is healthy to be ashamed of the sins you are involved in, don't let that shame become one of Satan's weapons to keep you trapped. Secrecy is often a Christian's biggest enemy, while confession can bring freedom and release from the bondage of an overwhelming sense of shame. If no one knows of your personal moral failures, there is no one to be accountable to, or to help lift you up in prayer or encourage you. Don't let your pride destroy you ([Prov. 29:23](#); [Mark 7:21](#); [2 Chr, 32:26](#)). In an accountability relationship, you choose a confidant that you can be honest and open with about your addiction. Confess your sin ([James 5:16](#)). Be sure to choose someone of the same sex.



Preferably, select a discrete person that has some spiritual maturity in their walk with Christ, and who has a helpful, non-condemning spirit.

Some of you are church leaders or teachers. We fully understand that breaking total secrecy about your sin is going to be especially difficult. But it is still necessary. God requires more of shepherds (not less) and holds them more accountable. Trust God and pray about who He would have assist you. Humble yourself. Proceed with wisdom and faith. Do what needs to be done. As a leader, it is even more important for you to do what is right and to deal decisively with your sin.

If your addiction involves viewing Internet pornography, there is an Internet service that can assist you. CovenantEyes.net is an on-line accountability service. They point out that "while Internet filters can provide some help, they can also block acceptable web sites, creating frustration. Filters can also be turned off or bypassed, rendering them ineffective. The Covenant Eyes Program removes the secrecy and privacy of using the Internet. Covenant Eyes promotes self-control and personal discipline, and the individual is held accountable in their Internet use."

It works by logging the address of each Web site visited, then compiling a list of visited sites that can be viewed on-line by your accountability partner. Users often find their temptation dramatically reduced and often leave it altogether once they know someone is monitoring their Web usage.

7. **Blocking Internet pornography**

If you spend much time on the Internet, computer monitoring (as mentioned above with Covenant Eyes) or Internet filters are highly recommended. There are many filters to choose from, including:

- **AFA Filter**—single profile, with no password overrides. This means no guessed or cracked passwords, resulting in maximum protection for children and adults. About \$40/yr. See: AFAfilter.com
- **Hedgebuilders**—free to pastors, missionaries, and Christian schools. Others pay a small fee. See: Hedge.org

8. Guard your heart, avoid temptations



Guard your heart with all diligence ([Proverbs 4:23](#)). Don't let the demonic realm influence your thought-life ([Ephesians 6:12-20](#)). If you give yourself to sinful fantasies and pursuits, you will become their slave ([Romans 6:16](#)).

A simple change of habit can do wonders in keeping you from temptation. For example, if you are most tempted when you spend time on the computer after your spouse has gone to bed, then make a commitment to stay off of the computer during that time. If you know that a certain street you drive down causes you to lust due to certain establishments on it, or prostitutes that hang around, or alluring billboards, you would be wise to travel a different route.

“Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word” ([Psalm 119:37](#)).

Stephen Arterburn in his book [Every Man's Battle](#) talks about retraining the eyes to “bounce away” from visual things that stimulate lust in you. For men, this might mean you need to look away as soon as you see a scantily dressed female jogger. Don't fuel your lust. Avert your eyes from temptations, and don't look back.

The same applies to visual temptations on magazines at the grocery store checkout line, or billboards, television programming and commercials. A good habit can be formed in around two weeks. Keep bouncing your gaze away, and remarkable improvement can be noticed rather quickly.



Destroy all pornographic materials in your possession—magazines, books, videos, and computer files. Make no provision for your flesh ([Romans 13:14](#)). If you can't

control yourself, then you must then get rid of every possible access to pornographic material in your life (Internet, cable TV, etc.). Stop feeding the fire.

If some friendships cause too much temptation, sever those relationships.

9. Recommended books

Because these can be difficult to find, we are making them available on-line (secure and discrete).



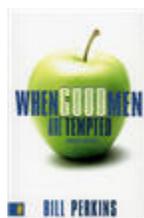
Every Man's Battle book

by Stephen Arterburn, Fred Stoeker, Mike Yorkey

Shares the stories of dozens who have escaped the trap of sexual immorality (pornography, adultery, etc.) and presents a practical, detailed plan for recovery / This book is designed for both men and women. Men, have you ever said in frustration, "I just can't get free of this sexual sin! Since I'm a man, I guess I'm just doomed to live this way." Wives, have you ever asked, "Why is it that my husband seems to think about sex so much more than I do?" Or, "If sex is so natural, why is it that I've been married 15 years and still have no real sexual intimacy with my husband?" Find the answers you need.

[\[More Details\]](#)

US\$15⁹⁹



When Good Men Are Tempted book (updated edition)

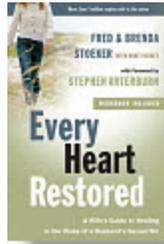
by Bill Perkins

A frank and realistic strategy for men to regain purity in the midst of a culture fraught with sexual temptations. Complete with "take action" steps, this book is a must for every man! The author (a pastor) candidly discusses his own struggles with sexual temptation and his desire to stay pure. He provides a biblical and practical strategy for victory. Wives, this book has helped many women understand their mates' temptations and struggles.

[\[More Details\]](#)

US\$13⁹⁹





Every Heart Restored book

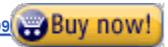
a wife's guide to healing in the wake of a husband's sexual sin

by Fred and Brenda Stoeker with Mike Yorkey, with Foreword by Stephen Arterburn

Are you the wife of a man who is addicted to lust, pornography, or masturbation? If so, you are not alone. This is the book for every woman who has become a casualty in the fight for sexual purity. *Every Heart Restored* offers godly guidance and wisdom for any woman facing such personal betrayal. Filled with stories from wives and husbands at every stage in the struggle for sexual purity, *Every Heart Restored* addresses the questions and real-life issues that matter to you most.

[\[More Details\]](#)

US\$15⁹⁹



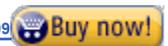
The Silent War: Ministering to Those Trapped in the Deception of Pornography book

by Henry J. Rogers

A lifeline in a world in love with evil. Offers hope to thousands of people trapped in secret sin. Pastors and counselors find it very helpful in better understanding and dealing with this very common problem. Endorsed by many Christian leaders.

[\[More Details\]](#)

US\$11⁹⁹



(in alphabetical order)

- **At the Alter of Sexual Idolatry** by Steve Gallagher (based on biblical counseling / founder of Pure Life Ministries which deals with sexual sin)
- **Breaking Free: Understanding Sexual Addiction & the Healing Power of Jesus** by Russell Willingham and Bob Davies (good, biblical treatment of sexual addiction)
- **Faithful and True: Sexual Integrity in a Fallen World** by Mark Laaser (a former pastor who was trapped in sexual addiction and recovered) (workbook also available)
- **False Intimacy: Understanding the Struggle of Sexual Addiction** by Dr. Harry W. Schaumburg (experienced counselor on sexual addictions / works with Christian leaders)

- **Out of the Shadows:** *Understanding Sexual Addiction*, Third Edition, by Patrick J. Carnes, Ph.D. (speaker and clinical director of sexual disorders at The Meadows, Wickenburg, AZ)
- **Pure Desire** by Ted Roberts (a pastor that overcame addiction to pornography) and Jack Hayford
- **Sex, Lies, and Forgiveness:** *Couples Speaking Out on Healing from Sex Addiction* by Burt and Jennifer Schneider (used only--no longer in print)
- **The Sexual Man** by Dr. Archibald D. Hart (based of nationwide research / refutes myths surrounding male sexuality)
- **Secret of Eve:** *Understanding the Mystery of Female Sexuality* by Dr. Archibald D. Hart (used only--no longer in print)
- **She has a Secret:** *Understanding Female Sexual Addiction* by D. Weiss, Ph.D.
- **A Way of Escape:** *Freedom from Sexual Strongholds* by Neil T. Anderson (president of Freedom in Christ ministries) and **Freedom from Addiction:** *Breaking the Bondage of Addiction and Finding Freedom in Christ* by Neil T. Anderson, Mike Quarles, Julia Quarles, and Terry Whalin

10. Counseling / support groups



You may need professional assistance or counseling for past or present sexual sins. There are many worthy organizations. See our list at

ChristianAnswers.Net/love/supportgroups.html

SUMMARY

Remember that God loves you, no matter what kind of sin and selfishness you have immersed yourself in, no matter what your destruction your sin has produced. Confess your sin, and admit the gravity of it. Understand that it is impossible to overcome sin totally on your own. Depend on God's help, and seek the support of others. Saturate your mind with God's Word. Pray often. Create barriers to reduce your exposure to temptation.

Confess your sin to another Christian (preferably of the same sex), and ask them to pray regularly for you and hold you accountable. Continue to read and learn about your addiction. Seek professional help, especially if the problem is severe and your life has been shattered. Get to work on rebuilding your life, now. If you would like a concerned and discreet Christian to advise you by e-mail about your specific problem, [contact us](#).



For more information and help, visit our [HOME](#) page

Also read

- How does one gain victory over temptation? [Answer](#)
- How can I be and feel forgiven? [Answer](#)
- If God forgives me every time I ask, why do I still feel so guilty? [Answer](#)
- How can I be sure of my salvation? [Answer](#)
- If God knows I am hurting, why doesn't He help me? [Answer](#)
- Does God feel our pain? [Answer](#)
- The Origin of bad - How did bad things come about? [Answer](#)
- What kind of world would you create, if you were God? [Read...](#)

[If this information has been helpful, please prayerfully consider a [donation](#) to help pay the expenses for making this faith-building service available to you and your family! Donations are tax-deductible.]

Author: Ken James of [Films for Christ](#), with contributions by Paul S. Taylor, Brian Lunde and Ray Comfort. Editor: Paul S. Taylor.

Copyright © 2001, Films for Christ, All Rights Reserved - except as noted on attached [“Usage and Copyright”](#) page that grants ChristianAnswers.Net users generous rights for putting this page to work in their homes, personal witnessing, churches and schools.



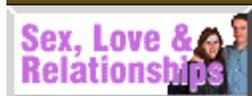
www.ChristianAnswers.Net

Christian Answers Network

PO Box 1167

Marysville WA 98270-1167

[Help is available](#)



Christian Answers Network [HOMEPAGE](#) and [DIRECTORY](#)

