

Freedom from Masturbation

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"Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?" Proverbs 6:27 NIV

Masturbation is often that one topic that people (especially Christians) really don't like to talk about. It's not something that is just a male problem these days, as many women also secretly struggle with it as well. Our culture tells us that there is nothing wrong with masturbation, yet our conscience often tells us otherwise...

I've written this study in order to encourage people at the very least to refrain from masturbation. Perhaps more importantly, I've written it to help people find and remove the roots involved with a masturbation addiction. Once you have dealt with the roots, controlling/eliminating the behavior becomes much less of a challenge.

This study is intended as an addendum or follow-on to my [Freedom Journey 1](#) study which addresses many of the foundational issues involved with recovering from sex addiction. If you haven't yet gone through *Freedom Journey 1*, I heartily encourage you to do so.

I remember as an adolescent how I struggled with shame and condemnation concerning this act over and over. Even so, the shame and condemnation did not empower me to get free. I continued to feed my habit with porn and promiscuity for the next 20 years, but eventually returned to God for help to finally jettison the habit. He responded and I found complete freedom. I discovered that life without masturbation was not only possible, but also enjoyable.

This study will help you:

- Decide if masturbation should be a part of your life
- Discover the root causes of masturbation addiction
- Go through the steps of resolving the root causes
- Maintain freedom from masturbation

I make this study freely available to all who want it. If you'd like to make a contribution to support this work and the other materials on this website, please visit <http://www.porn-free.org/donations.htm>. Thank You!

Study outline:

- [Masturbation: Good or Bad?](#)
- [Roots of Masturbation](#)
- [Recovery](#)
- [Wrap-up](#)

Masturbation: Good or Bad?

The purpose of this page is to explain why masturbation can be detrimental to life and to encourage people to abandon the practice. Granted, masturbation may bring temporary pleasure, but it often comes with the long-term cost of addiction and other sexual problems. Because many people reading this page are not Christians, I've created a separate section for the spiritually-based points. If you are a Christian, I encourage you to take a moment to ask God to show you the truth concerning masturbation.

Non-spiritual points about masturbation

1. Masturbation is addictive! I encourage anyone who doubts masturbation is addictive to see how many weeks or months they can go without masturbating. We know now that sexual addictions are in fact self-induced drug addictions. The chemicals our bodies release during sexual arousal create the same effect on the brain as drugs. Repeated masturbation reinforces a brain chemistry loop of addiction. (ref: *Exposing Porn: Science, Religion, and the New Addiction*, Paul Strand. www.cbn.com, April 2004) As with drug addiction, masturbation requires an increasing amount of stimulus to achieve consistent levels of pleasure. This can lead to both an increased frequency of the habit and a never-ending search for new material to enhance the experience.

2. Masturbation conditions our bodies to respond to self-stimulation, which is self-centered. This damages our ability to relate to another person sexually. Sex is a relational experience, where we give attention to another person's needs at least as much as to our own. If we've been serving our own desires habitually, we may find it difficult to give our partner the attention he or she desires. Additionally, the hormones released in the brain during sexual arousal cause a bonding to whatever we are looking at and/or thinking about at the time. This can cause us to be more sexually responsive to masturbation (and its associated fantasies) than to real sex.

3. Masturbation causes sexual imbalance: Masturbation stirs up our sexual emotions and trains our bodies to seek sexual release more frequently than normal. Common sense tells us that there should be a balance between sex and the other activities in our lives. Masturbation disrupts that balance by training our bodies and minds to expect gratification more frequently than normal. Like a feedback loop in an amplifier, the imbalance between reality and fantasy can likely drive a person further into the addiction.

The sexual imbalance can also affect other areas of our lives by diverting energy, time and resources into sexual activity. For example, a man stays up late each night to surf for porn to masturbate to. His job performance suffers because he can't stay awake during the day, his family life sours because he's grouchy, his wife is alienated from him by his lack of affection and interest in her, and his debt increases because of the credit card charges from the porn sites he's visiting to feed his habit.

The people most likely to suffer from the imbalance are people who don't have a regular provision for sexual intimacy (e.g. teens, singles, divorced persons, widowed persons, persons in sexually dysfunctional marriages). Ironically, these are the same people that may be strongly tempted to indulge in porn and masturbation. If they whet their appetite by indulging, chances are that they could easily get hooked in the addictive cycle that the imbalance creates.

Spiritual points about masturbation

For Christians, there are some important issues we need to address concerning masturbation. The foundational question is, "Are you committed to honoring God with your life?" If you are, then I urge you to carefully consider the points presented in this section.

Let's first examine the typical sins that accompany masturbation: lust and sexual idolatry. These may not be involved in every case, but they usually are.

Lust

Definitions from *Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary*:

- (n) Intense or unbridled sexual desire, lasciviousness...an intense longing: craving
- (v) to have an intense desire or need, crave

Obvious examples of lust during masturbation include looking at pornography and fantasizing about sex. As we can see from the definitions, lust can simply be

an intense longing or craving. It may not even be a conscious thought, but simply a gut feeling of the flesh.

Sexual Idolatry

Definition of idolatry from *Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary*:

- (n) Immoderate attachment or devotion to something

Definitions of idol from *Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary*:

- A likeness of something
- A form or appearance; visible but without substance
- An object of extreme devotion
- A representation or symbol of an object of worship
- A false conception; fallacy

When we look at porn or form sexual images by memory or imagination during masturbation, we are basically feeding an immoderate attachment or devotion to the idol of sex. Such attachment and devotion is greatly reinforced by the pleasurable brain chemicals released during sexual arousal and orgasm.

Idolatry is sin ([Exodus 20:3-5](#)) and it can bring unpleasant consequences, such as demonic oppression and generational curses. God's primary command to us is that we love him with all our heart, soul and mind ([Matthew 22:36-38](#)). I suggest that it is impossible to love God with all our heart, soul and mind when we are idolizing sex images in our eyes and thoughts!

Having discussed lust and sexual idolatry, we can now explore the spiritual impact of masturbation.

1. Masturbation causes you to be "mastered" by sin: The Bible says that there are only two things that we can be a slave to: sin or righteousness. There are no other masters. Paul wrote:

Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? Romans 6:16 [NKJV](#)

Which master does masturbation bring us under? In almost every case, it is used to complement sins of lust or sexual idolatry and will therefore enslave us to sin.

God does not want us to be mastered by sin. For example, he told Cain, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it" (Genesis 4:7 [NKJV](#)). Cain failed and sin ruled him for the rest of his life. After killing his brother, he lost his job, his peace, his home, and his blessing and spent the rest of his days as a "restless wanderer" (Genesis 4:12).

Likewise, we have the same opportunity to choose our master. If we choose sin as our master, our life will bear the fruit that sin brings - i.e. destruction, sorrow, dissatisfaction, death, etc.. If we choose righteousness as our master, we will reap life! Paul wrote:

²⁰When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:20-23 [NIV](#)

2. Masturbation uses your body as an instrument for sin: Your body is to be presented and used as an instrument for righteousness, not sin. Paul wrote:

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God Romans 6:12-13 [NKJV](#)

God can best use us when we keep our "vessels" (body, soul & spirit) free of sin. Paul wrote:

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:20-22 [NIV](#)

It is our responsibility to cleanse ourselves from sinful motives and purposes with the help of the Holy Spirit. Practicing masturbation is the exact opposite of fleeing evil desires because it involves setting our minds on the evil desires and using our bodies to act them out. In so doing, we are hindering the usefulness of our vessels for God.

3. Masturbation defiles God's temple and grieves the Holy Spirit: As believers in Jesus Christ, our bodies are literally temples for God's Holy Spirit, who lives in us. Sexual sin is unique in that it damages this special union we have with God. Paul alluded to this when he wrote that sexual sin is sinning against our own bodies (([1 Corinthians 6:18](#)). He even compared it to trying to unite Jesus with a prostitute ([1 Corinthians 6:15-16](#)). Since masturbation rehearses sexual sins (e.g. lust or sexual idolatry), it will likewise damage our relationship with God and defile his temple (our bodies).

God commands us to "honor God with your body" ([1 Corinthians 6:20 NIV](#)). This is a form of *spiritual* worship that we do *physically*:

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer 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." Romans 12:1-2 [NIV](#)

4. Masturbation reinforces "carnal-mindedness": Masturbation sets our minds on gratifying our sinful desires and in so doing we become "carnally minded." Paul wrote:

Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want Galatians 5:16-17 [NIV](#)

Carnal-mindedness destroys our life and peace and keeps us from pleasing God. Paul wrote:

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God Romans 8:5-8 [NKJV](#)

5. Masturbation brings you into deception and corruption: Masturbation opens the door to the deceiving influences of lust. Paul wrote about this deceit in Ephesians 4:22-24 [NKJV](#):

Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Embracing lust or sexual idolatry through masturbation will therefore hinder any progress we want to make in becoming the "new man" God created us to be

([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). Our repeated practice of lust through masturbation will also bring about a "hardening" of our spiritual heart toward God ([Hebrews 3:13](#)). This could ultimately cause us to turn away from God completely.

6. Masturbation molds your mind into the world's pattern of thinking: The world's pattern is largely based on lust (1 John 2:15-17). Masturbation rehearses lust in our thoughts and reinforces it with physical pleasure. Using pornography or recalling sex memories while masturbating further ingrains the world's pattern in our thoughts.

The consequence of embracing the world's pattern (i.e. the pleasures of sin), is that we will block God's love from operating in and through us:

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV

God wants us to no longer conform to the world's pattern of thinking, but be transformed in our thinking:

Do not conform any longer 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. Romans 12:2 NIV

Concluding Comments

One of the questions that we frequently hear is, "Is masturbation without lust or sexual idolatry wrong?" I'm skeptical that this is even possible, yet for the sake of discussion let's say that it is. Masturbation clearly sows to the flesh and its desires (see point #4 above). God commands his followers to sow to the Spirit's desires and not the flesh's desires ([Galatians 6:8](#)). While it may be permissible for a Christian to practice masturbation, how could it be beneficial since it sets the mind on the flesh's desires ([1 Corinthians 6:12](#))?

Overall, masturbation can rob you of many of the blessings God has planned for your life. If you are a Christian, you have an obligation, **not to** live focused on fulfilling your fleshly lusts, but rather, to live focused on fulfilling the Holy Spirit's desires ([Romans 8:12-13](#)). Masturbation poses the threat of lifelong bondage and a handicapped spiritual walk. Jesus was resurrected so that you also could live in a new life, free from the slavery of sin.

Roots of Masturbation

Note: As you go through this page, feel free to print it, write on it and use it as a study guide.

As with other sex addiction activities, masturbation can have one or many root causes. In order to stop the habit, we'll need to address the root causes.

Step 1: Ask God to help you answer the question, "Why am I masturbating?"

A simple prayer for this could be:

"Heavenly Father, I invite you to help me discover the reasons for why I have been masturbating. Please reveal the truth to me through the Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus Christ, I command any voice that is not of God to be silent now. I speak the peace of Christ to my mind, spirit and body. Thank you, Father, In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

Following this prayer, it would be helpful to spend time in silent prayer, listening for the Holy Spirit. Write down any thoughts that come up and thank God for whatever he reveals. Some common reasons for masturbation we've seen include:

- Medicate pain of rejection, abuse, poor self-esteem, etc.
- Medicate frustration or stress
- Love of pleasure
- Self-pity
- Independence / self-sufficiency
- Complement a porn habit
- "Safe" sex / trying to maintain physical virginity
- "Healthy release" of sexual tension
- Impatience: Unwilling to wait on God for sexual provision

Reasons for my habit: _____
(list as appropriate for you)

Step 2: Identify the associated roots

Once we know the surface reasons for our habit, we can then seek to uncover the root causes of those reasons. Again, we should invite God to guide us in discovering the roots. A sample prayer for this is: "Lord, please help me understand the root causes behind the reasons for my habit. Please help me to see the truth. Thank you, Father! Amen."

Roots usually begin with an experience that disrupts our healthy physical, emotional or spiritual development. If we respond to that experience in unhealthy (i.e. sinful) ways, it will cause the root to grow. There are so many possible scenarios of how these roots can get started, that it's impossible to cover them all here. By sharing some of the roots we've seen, we hope to help you uncover the roots under your habit.

Generally, the roots involve sin that we committed or that someone committed against us. Here are some examples of roots linked to masturbation:

- Trauma / violence / abuse / molestation
- Rejection (e.g. unloved by parents, being made fun of by peers, abuse, getting dumped by girlfriend or boyfriend, etc.)
- [Generational](#) influences
- [Unforgiveness](#) (including bitterness, resentment, grudges, etc.)
- [Occult activity](#)
- [Sexual sin](#)
- [Pride](#) ("I can do it myself," or "I don't need anyone," or "I don't need God," etc..)
- [Lust](#) / [sexual idolatry](#)
- [Soul ties](#)
- [Homosexual activity](#) and other perversions (bestiality, group sex, fetishes, etc.)

Take some time to think through your life starting from as far back as you can remember and look for indications of starting points for roots such as those listed above. Let God's Spirit lead you as you do this. I've listed some typical life periods below where roots are often started. Be sure to write down any roots that the Lord shows you as you do this.

Early childhood (0-3): _____

Pre-school (3-6): _____

Grade School (7-12): _____

Teens (13-19): _____

Career/College/Marriage/etc. (20-40): _____

Other: _____

Here is an example of how these roots can get started and grow in our lives: A father continually berates his 7 yr old son for his poor sports ability. The father is unable to see any value in his son's love for music, art and drama. "Those activities are for sissies," according to the father. The son is emotionally wounded by his father's rejection and this becomes the starting point of a "root of rejection." Over the following years, the father continues to ridicule his son. The boy begins to believe that he can do nothing right in his father's eyes and that he'll never amount to anything. As the boy grows into adolescence, he responds to the pain of rejection by being reclusive and rebellious. When a friend introduces him to pornography and masturbation, the boy discovers a pleasure he never knew before. The intimate images of porn offer him the acceptance and love he's always longed for. It doesn't matter to him that the porn is based on fantasy - he'll take any love and acceptance he can get. Finding solace in masturbation, he soon finds himself addicted to it.

Step 3: Remove the roots

The importance of removing the roots cannot be underestimated. Leaving them as is will almost certainly make it more difficult to stop masturbating. Also, the roots will continue to release "spiritual poison" that damages us. Moses mentioned this in Deuteronomy 29:18 NIV: "**Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison.**" In the Israelites' case, idolatry was the root that produced the poison of spiritual confusion. Masturbation's roots produce poisons such as sexually-charged memories, selfishness, lust, perversion, numbed conscience and damaged relational skills. The longer we allow the root to remain in us, the deeper the damage that we'll have to recover from.

We encourage you to be patient as you go through the "root removal" process. This can often take time to deal with. Don't allow the devil to convince you to give up. Keep at it persistently as the Lord directs you. Don't settle for the lie that "you'll never be free."

A. Start with Prayer: Prayer plugs us into God's power supply. He has the power to work the impossible. Jesus said, "**With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible**" (Matthew 19:26 NIV). As you pray, believe in your heart that God's power is going to make the difference. Believe that he is hearing

your prayer and will respond. Your faith completes the "circuit" of God's power in your life.

Sample Prayer: "Father God, I thank you for loving me and dying for me. Thank you for being with me right now. Please help me remove the roots of my addiction completely. Please guide me and protect me from the evil one. I believe in the freedom that is mine through Jesus Christ. Please help me in any unbelief I may have. Thank you, Father."

B. Confession, Repentance and Release: In this step we take responsibility for our sin involved with the masturbation and its roots. We repent from the sin by turning away from it and no longer embracing it. Finally, we must release any unhealthy attitudes we have clung to.

It is possible that you may encounter resistance as you attempt to confess the root sins. The resistance may indicate the presence of evil spirits/demons associated with the root. Manifestations of this resistance can widely vary. Some examples could include: hot flashes, difficulty speaking, difficulty breathing, uncontrollable thoughts, uncontrollable bodily movement, rage, physical pain and the mind "blinking out."

We share this not to cause fear, but simply to prepare you in advance for what you may experience. If the devil has you in bondage, he will be reluctant to let you go. No matter what happens, know that the Lord Jesus is with you and lives in you and is greater than any power of the devil. If any such manifestations occur, you can take authority over them in the name of Jesus Christ and command them to stop. An example statement you can make is, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command the evil spirit causing this manifestation to stop. I am saved by the blood of Jesus and I have [authority](#) over you. Release me right now." At that point you should be able to proceed. If not, you may want to obtain help from a trusted group of believers who will help you pray and work through the root area. It may be that you will need "[deliverance ministry](#)" to completely deal with that area.

- **Confess and repent from the sin involved with your masturbation habit:** These typically are lust, sexual idolatry, love of pleasure, and pride in self-provision. Example prayer: "Heavenly Father, I confess that I have idolized sex in my mind and dwelled on lustful thoughts. I confess that I have imagined myself committing sexual sin while masturbating. I confess that I have turned to my own provision for sex and have not waited for your best for my sexuality. I repent from all of these activities and renounce my tolerance of these sins in my life. Thank you for

forgiving me through the blood of Jesus! I receive that forgiveness in Jesus' name, Amen."

- **Confess and repent from the sin you committed in each root area:**
Taking the roots you wrote down in the above section, now confess the specific sins that you committed. If you are not sure about the sins involved, ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify them. Here are some examples of possible sins involved with respective roots:

<u>Root</u>	<u>Examples of possible sins involved</u>
Trauma	fear, rage, violent behavior, unforgiveness, hatred
Rejection	unforgiveness, rebellion, perversion, hatred
Occult activity (witchcraft)	pride, lust for power, trying to control others
Sexual sin	lust, sexual idolatry, love of pleasure, pride
Soul ties	Cherishing sin memories
Homosexuality	Rebellion, unforgiveness, lust, hatred of man/woman

Example prayer for confession and repentance:

"Heavenly Father, I confess that I have sinned in the following ways: _____ . Please forgive me for these sins. I turn from them now and shut the door on them. I seal the door with the blood of Jesus Christ. I renounce my activities associated with these sins. I recommit myself to you, Lord, body, soul and spirit."

- **Release:** We must release anything we are holding onto related to the former roots that is a stumbling block for sin. Examples include unforgiveness, cherished sin memories, anger, hatred, malice and the desire for revenge. These attitudes will continue to poison our mind and emotions until we release them to God.

Unforgiveness and cherished sin memories are common with sex addicts. To release unforgiveness, we must forgive the people involved (with Jesus' help). For the cherished sin memories, we must surrender the memories to God and restrain our thoughts from fantasizing over them any further.

Example prayer of release: "Father, I release these sinful attitudes and/or cherished memories to you right now. Specifically, I release _____ (list your specific items). Please take them from me and cleanse me with the blood of Jesus from any residue or poison they have left in me. I forgive the people who have done evil to me: _____ (list them). Please fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit now and replace any former areas of sin with love, joy, peace,

kindness, patience, self-control, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness. Thank you, Father."

C. Pray for healing: This final activity is where we invite God to complete the healing in us that our confession and repentance has cleared the way for. 1 John 1:9 NKJV says, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Also, James 5:15 NIV says, "And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven." God will purify us, heal us, raise us up and forgive us when we've confessed our sin and prayed in faith for healing of our addiction.

Praying for healing is not rocket science. Remember that it is the Lord who will do the healing and all you need to do is to ask and believe that he will do so. You don't have to pray an elaborate prayer to receive results. You simply need to be sincere and prepared to back up your healing by obedience in the respective area.

Some activities that will help you get into the right mindset for praying for healing include:

- Spend time in praise and worship prior to praying
- Review and recite [scriptures on healing](#) during your prayer times and throughout the day to boost your faith level
- Allow God time to respond during your prayer, i.e. don't talk the whole time! Prayer is a conversation with God, so take time to listen and reflect on God's word.
- Allow plenty of time for your prayer, so that you are not rushed
- Pray intermittently [in tongues](#) as the Lord leads you
- Remember to thank the Lord for the healing he has and will do in you
- More on prayer: [Prayer Basics](#)

Here are some example prayers for healing:

- Removal of any remaining roots: "Lord, I pray that you will complete the root removal process that I have started. If there are any roots that I have missed, please reveal them to me and help me remove them. "
- Revelation of any unconfessed sin associated with your former addiction: "Lord, please shine the light of your truth in me, especially in any dark areas of sin that I have not confessed. Please help me recognize my sin for what it is."

- Restoration of healthy sexual desire and function: "Lord, please heal my sexuality and redirect my sex drive to normal function as you originally designed it." And, if married: "Please restore a healthy, loving sexual desire in me for my spouse and in my spouse for me."
- Cleansing/healing of memories of sexual sin or abuse: "Lord, please wash my mind and conscience with the blood of Jesus. Please cleanse my mind from the dead works of sin that I have done."
- Breaking of soul ties developed through sex sin, pornography or abuse: "Lord, please cut any unhealthy soul ties that I have developed with pornography, fetishes, sex partners, family members and anyone else. I apply the blood of Jesus to each unhealthy soul tie I have developed. By faith I declare those soul ties broken in Jesus' name. Father, please restore me to wholeness - body, soul and spirit. Please restore those persons I have been tied to as well. "
- Destruction of the altar of sexual idolatry in our mind: "Lord please help me destroy the altar of sexual idolatry in my mind. I renounce the use of my thoughts for worshipping and lusting about sex. I have the mind of Christ and I take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."
- Deliverance from any evil spirits that continue to oppress you: "Lord Jesus, please free me from any remaining evil spirits that continue to torment me. Please reveal any remaining footholds that they may have in me, so that I may repent." (see [deliverance study](#) for more help)

We encourage you to pray for healing in those and any other areas the Lord reveals to you. It may also help to have some trusted friends in the Lord pray with you in faith for healing. Some roots take more prayer sessions than others to heal from, so be patient and persistent. For example, I periodically pray for continued healing and cleansing of my memories of sexual sin even many years after being porn-free. It can take time to restore the mind to health and wash away the evil things we've allowed in.

Recovery

After removing the roots and praying for healing, we can then "secure the beachhead" of freedom that we have established. We can count on the devil testing us to see if we are in fact free.

The first area the devil will test us in is our faith, because faith is the means by which we withstand his attacks. In 1 Corinthians 16:13 NKJV Paul wrote, "**Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.**" Faith also composes a key piece of our spiritual armor, the [shield of faith](#), which we are to use to "**extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one**" (Ephesians 6:16 NIV).

The devil's strategy to weaken our faith is to bombard us with lies. If we believe the lies, our shield of faith will be weakened because it is no longer based on truth, and the devil's arrows will get through. To repel an attack on our faith we must use the truth that destroys the lies. This is why it is crucial that we get into the Bible at least once a day (typically in a "[quiet time](#)") to learn the truth that sets us free (John 8:31-32). Knowing God's word will also build our faith up (Romans 10:17).

If you want to maximize your battle readiness, memorize key verses that apply to the temptations you normally face. With the verses in your mind, you won't have to flip through your Bible at the moment of temptation, looking for a verse to use. Jesus demonstrated this strategy when he faced Satan in the wilderness temptations (Luke 4). To every temptation Jesus responded by quoting the scripture that diffused the lies.

I recommend using a simple system to memorize verses. During my quiet times I write out the verses that are meaningful to me on 3 x 5 note cards (see [suggested verses](#)). I review the verses during the week while exercising, waiting for appointments, sitting in traffic and other idle times. Once I have memorized 12 verses, I start a new group. Another system that works well is the [Topical Memory System](#), published by the Navigators.

Making the effort to memorize key verses *will* pay off. I've found that the Holy Spirit will remind me of my memory verses throughout the day, particularly when I'm being tempted. Having the verses in mind also helps me keep my thoughts trained on God instead of carnal things.

To illustrate how to use the verses, here are some typical lies the devil uses and sample replies using memory verses:

- "You haven't changed...you're not really free...it's just a matter of time before you fall" *Reply:* "The scripture says, 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!' I am a new creation and I am free because Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (refs: 2 Corinthians 5:17 & John 8:31-32)
- "God doesn't care about you and he won't provide for your sexual needs" *Reply:* "The scripture says that God 'Himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.' God cares so much for me that he sacrificed his only Son for my sake. He will provide for all my needs! The scripture also says, 'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and

- all these things will be given to you as well.'" (Refs: 1 Peter 2:24 & Matthew 6:33 NIV)
- "It's impossible to live without masturbating" *Reply:* "The scripture says, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' My old self was crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me. I CAN live without masturbation and Jesus will help me do so." (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:13 NKJV)
 - "The Holy Spirit is not really living in you and he won't help you" *Reply:* "The scripture says that the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead gives life to my mortal body. The Holy Spirit enables me to put the sinful deeds of my body to death." (Refs: Romans 8:11,13)
 - "God won't provide a way out of temptation for you" *Reply:* "The scripture says that God is faithful and just and will provide a way out of the temptation so that I can stand up under it." (Ref: 1 Corinthians 10:13)
 - See more lies and the truth that refutes them: [Sex Addiction Lies](#)

The second area that devil will test us in is the old patterns or "triggers" of temptation that used to lead us to sin. These will obviously vary from person to person, and usually will relate in some way to the roots we examined in the previous section of this study. For example, some of typical triggers for masturbation can be:

- Stress/Fear/Rejection/Loneliness
- Taking long showers
- Watching late night TV with sexual themes
- People-watching
- Surfing the internet when alone
- Thumbing through magazines with sexual themes
- Looking at porn (obviously)
- Sensual contact with girlfriend/boyfriend
- Fetishes
- Dwelling on sexual memories

Take a moment to ask God to show you what your particular triggers have been for masturbation and write them down:

When we respond to a trigger and move toward acting out, we'll find it's easy to go back down the old familiar road of temptation and follow through with masturbation. What we need to do is determine a Godly plan of action on how we will now respond to a trigger when we encounter it. God gives us several options for how to respond, including:

- Flee the temptation (2 Timothy 2:22; [Genesis 39:6-13](#))
- Look for the way out of the temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Pray for help (Matthew 26:41; Hebrews 2:18)
- Take [control of your eyes](#) (turn eyes away, shut off temptation source, etc.) (Isaiah 33:15)
- [Arrest sinful thoughts](#), cast down sinful imaginations/speculations, and redirect your mind heavenward (2 Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:1-2)
- Use your body as instrument of righteousness and not for sin (Romans 6:11-14)

To illustrate how to put these responses to action, here are some typical triggers and possible actions to take:

- Stress/Fear/Rejection/Loneliness: Run to Jesus through prayer on the spot instead of running to masturbation to medicate yourself; remind yourself of key verses that address the trigger (e.g. fear (Romans 8:15; 1 Peter 5:7); loneliness (John 14:18; Matthew 28:20); Rejection (Romans 8:15-16); Stress (1 Peter 5:7))
- Taking long showers: Take "navy showers," i.e. get the scrubbing done and get out; if you have to, take a colder shower than normal; play a praise and worship CD in the background to get your thoughts focused heavenward
- Watching late night TV with sexual themes: Set an early time you will turn the TV off by each night and stick to it. Use the time you would have spent watching TV to do something meaningful (spend time with family, pray, worship, read the Bible, etc.).
- People-watching: Take control of your eyes and force them to stop looking at the people you know are causing you to lust. For example, if teenage blondes cause you to lust, then choose to look the other way when you notice one coming your way. Don't let your gaze dwell on the temptation! (see [control eyes](#) for more)
- Surfing the internet when alone: Don't get on the computer unless someone is there nearby. If you know you'll be home alone, don't even turn the computer on. Plan something to do in place of surfing the net.
- Thumbing through magazines with sexual themes: Avoid the magazine stand or wherever you normally look at the magazines. If the magazines

are not your own, consider asking the owner for help in restricting your exposure to them. For example, if your roommate's porn collection is causing you to fall, you could ask him/her to lock it up or password protect it.

- Looking at porn: Take whatever drastic measures you can to stop the input of porn images. If it means installing a filter, or moving your computer to a common area, or even getting rid of your computer temporarily, do it!
- Sensual contact with girlfriend/boyfriend: Ask your friend to help you by joining you in committing your relationship and activities to God. Agree in prayer together to not cross the boundaries that will cause sexual arousal. (e.g. long kissing, sleeping together, heavy petting, mutual masturbation, watching movies w/sex scenes, etc.). Take steps ahead of time to avoid placing yourselves in tempting situations.
- Fetishes: Get rid of any object you have been using as a fetish. Confess your idolatry and pray that God will cut you free from the unhealthy attachment you have to the fetishes. Also, ask the Lord to break any demonic power involved with the fetish and the hold it may have on you. Force your mind and eyes off any fetish-related thing that causes you to fantasize.
- Dwelling on sexual memories: Whenever you catch yourself reminiscing about your sexual memories, start pleading the "blood of Jesus" over the memory. Follow this by forcing your thoughts onto a wholesome topic (see [thoughts](#)).

Now, for your particular triggers from the previous section, brainstorm on actions you can take to break the pattern for each one and write them down below:

Take a moment to declare to yourself and the Lord in faith that you have the power to choose differently and break the patterns that have plagued you in the past. You can pray:

"Heavenly Father, I am a new creation in Christ and the life that I live now I live by faith in God, who loved me and gave himself up for me. The Holy Spirit lives in me and is strengthening me now to live as the truly changed person that I am in Christ. I have the power through Christ who strengthens me to break my old

trigger patterns of masturbation. I commit myself to breaking the trigger patterns. Father, please strengthen my conviction to reject any trigger that I may encounter. Please sharpen my conscience and passion for purity. Thank you, Father! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

Finally, back up the commitment you just made by [sharing it](#) with a trusted friend, accountability partner or pastor who will agree with you in prayer and encourage you in keeping your commitment over the coming months.

Wrap-up

Now that we've addressed the major points in breaking masturbation addiction, we encourage you to proceed in building-up your relationship with Jesus. Paul wrote:

"As you have therefore received Christ, [even] Jesus the Lord, [so] walk (regulate your lives and conduct yourselves) in union with and conformity to Him. Have the roots [of your being] firmly and deeply planted [in Him, fixed and founded in Him], being continually built up in Him, becoming increasingly more confirmed and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and abounding and overflowing in it with thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6-7 AMP

Paul encouraged the Colossians to have their roots "firmly and deeply planted" in Christ and to continually be built up in him. We can begin to do the same by meeting with the Lord in a daily [quiet time](#) and by connecting with other believers in [church](#).

We encourage you to take our other courses as the Lord leads you (see [online courses](#)).