

Freedom Journey 1

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by Paul Cook

YOU CAN BE FREE! This is a study to help you walk to freedom from whatever you may be struggling with. I have written the study with the sex addict in mind, but the principles apply to anyone seeking a closer walk with Jesus. My prayer is that you, like me, will discover the freedom that is yours in Jesus.

Freedom Journey is based on the teachings of the Bible. If you have not placed your trust in Jesus, we encourage you to first my [Peace with God](#) page (Appendix B), before proceeding through *Freedom Journey*.

To maximize the effectiveness of this study, I recommend that you keep a written journal of your progress through each page of the study. I also suggest that you keep a Bible handy as you go through the study. Also, please work through the pages in the order that they are presented in the study. Skipping ahead will be like trying to build a house without the proper foundation. Each page builds on the foundation established in the pages that precede it.

Study Outline:

- Getting Started
- Deal with Sin
- Cut Free
- Healing Prayer for the Roots of Sexual Addiction
- Clean House
- Old Self New Self
- Quiet Times
- Break Secrecy
- Train Eyes
- Control Thoughts
- Practical Examples
- Wrap-up

Appendix:

- A. Why some people don't get free of sexual addiction
- B. Peace with God
- C. Verses for Faith
- D. Finding a Good Church

Getting Started on Freedom Journey

As you take your first steps on this journey, I'd like to assure you that through faith in Jesus, you have peace with God. People often feel separated from God because of their bad deeds. The scriptures assure us that since Jesus bore the penalty for our sin on the cross, we have peace with God. He is not angry with us for our sins. Instead, he offers us the forgiveness that Jesus' death bought for us. You can now boldly approach God ([Hebrews 4:16](#)) in prayer and have full assurance that he will hear our prayers. God's Holy Spirit, who lives in you, will help you walk to purity ([Romans 8:11,13](#)).

Believe that you CAN be completely free! Breaking addiction is a *healing process* and believing that you can be free is an important part. Jesus said, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23 [NKJV](#)). We exercise our faith when we believe in God's word and confess it with our mouth ([Romans 10:10](#)). It could be as simple as saying to ourselves each day when we get out of bed, "I believe that in Christ I can be and will be free of my struggle." Often our natural circumstances may not appear to be lining up with God's word. The challenge is to not allow our circumstances (or past failures) to steal our hope. Faith believes in what is yet unseen ([Hebrews 11:1-3](#)). It releases God's power in us to perform the impossible and bring the unseen into reality!

As you go through Freedom Journey, we encourage you to tap into as many faith-building sources as possible. Here are some examples of faith-builders:

- **Reading God's word (the Bible):** Faith comes through hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). The Bible contains all of God's promises to us. It gives us many accounts of real people who believed God to encourage us in our faith. Scripture study, memorization and recitation help us learn the promises and their application to everyday life. See our suggested [verses on faith](#) (Appendix C) to get started. As we learn God's Word through the Bible, our faith grows and we can speak God's promises into our life.
- **Prayer for help:** Sometimes our pride can prevent us from simply asking for help. Jesus will help build our faith for freedom. In [Mark 9:17-29](#), Jesus demonstrated that God will help us with our unbelief, perfecting our weak faith for victory ([Hebrews 12:2](#)).
- **Faith-filled friends:** Our friends can influence our faith level greatly. Jesus healed the paralytic in [Mark 2:1-12](#) because of the faith of his friends who dug through the roof and lowered the paralytic down to where Jesus was teaching. Faith-filled friends will encourage you in the Lord and strengthen your faith for freedom.
- **Faith-filled church:** The church can influence our faith greatly just as our friends can. It's important to get "plugged in" to a church that will encourage you to believe God for victory (see [Church](#) Page – Appendix D).

Recognize that you need God's help: Pride is something that keeps us at a distance from God ([James 4:6-8](#)). Pride says things like, "I don't need God," or "I can get free on my own." The scriptures affirm that God resists proud people, but he draws near to humble people. The first step toward humility is to tell God that we need him. The prayer below will help you make that first step.

A prayer for the journey

The scripture says, "**The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them**" ([Psalm 145:18-19](#)). We encourage you to take time right now and pray this recommended prayer for your journey:

"Heavenly Father, I have sinned against you in many ways (*name your sins as they come to mind*). I ask for your forgiveness, cleansing and healing for every step of this journey. Lord, I need your help to get free of the sins that hold me. Please forgive me for any pride I have harbored in my heart. Father, please create in me a clean heart, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Please re-ignite the Holy Spirit's fire within me. Please restore the joy of Your salvation in me. Please uphold me by Your generous Spirit. I commit myself to serving you from this point on in my life, and ask that you will accomplish Your will in my life and not my own. You are my King and I am Your servant. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall praise You. Teach me Your ways, that I may walk in them for the rest of my life. Thank You, Father. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen." (based on Psalm 51)

Deal with Sin

Before you read this page, please take a moment to ask God to prepare your heart and mind for what you will read. Because people often encounter difficulty in going through this page, I encourage you to also [bind](#) any evil spirits that may be influencing you. Here is an example prayer:

"Lord God, I praise you for leading me to this place. I recognize that I need your help. Please help me identify and turn from the sin in my life. In the name of Jesus Christ, I bind any evil spirits from interfering with my reading of this page or my confession of sin. I loose the peace of God in my mind and body right now. Lord please send your holy angels to assist me and minister to me as I work through this page. Thank you, Father! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

When you received Jesus into your life and accepted his sacrifice for your sin, how much of your life did you surrender to his control? I spent years living as a "carnal

Christian" after I asked Jesus into my life. I continued to live as though Jesus was not my master. The results were disastrous. Porn addiction was just one of the many bad habits I developed during this time. The Bible describes the need for us to submit *all* areas of our lives to God (James 4:7).

Why is sin so bad?: Sin is rebellion against God. It brings an offense between us and God that can only be removed by death (Romans 6:23). When we practice the same sin over and over, we can "grieve" or "put out the fire" of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The result of this can be a feeling of separation from God and a "sapping" of our strength to live in righteousness. By [accepting Jesus' payment for our sin](#), we receive forgiveness for our sins and can then reconnect with the Holy Spirit.

What does God want me to do with my sin? God wants us to agree with him that our sin is wrong (confess it) and then turn away from it and no longer practice it (repent from it). Confession and repentance will open doors of forgiveness, cleansing and healing in our lives that we need in order to walk free of sex addiction. Here are three references for this:

- Acts 3:19 [NIV](#): "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord"
- 1 John 1:9 [NIV](#): "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- James 5:15 [NIV](#): "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."

Identify your sin: Before we confess and repent, we should take an inventory of the sins we've been committing. I've listed below some of the common sin areas involved with sexual addictions. As you read through this list, be sure to note which areas seem to apply to you. It may be helpful to print this page out and circle the areas that apply to you. If the Lord reminds you of [additional sins](#), please write them down and include them in the confession & repentance prayers in the next section.

Common sins involved with sex addiction

- **Lust:** Lust and porn addiction work together like old friends. A good definition for lust comes from the Greek word *Epithumia* Strong's #1939), meaning the "desire for what is forbidden." Most sex addictions, if not all, involve lust. (further study: [Lust](#))
- **Lying/Deception/Covering Sin:** Sex addicts usually prefer to keep their habit hidden from others. Pride, fear, shame, stubbornness and love of pleasure can all be contributing factors to covering the sin up. Keeping our sin secret from others blocks God's blessings on our lives ([Proverbs 28:13](#)). Bringing it to the light can

be fearful and painful, but once we do, we open the door for God's healing and forgiveness (1 John 1:9; James 5:15-16). We'll further address breaking secrecy later in this study.

- **Pride:** Pride is perhaps the most self-deceptive sin. There are so many ways it can manifest in our lives. Some indicators of pride can be: fearing exposure of our secret sin, criticizing others, resisting the Holy Spirit, refusing to admit we need help and avoiding accountability. The problem with pride is that it prevents us from drawing near to God and receiving the help we need to live in purity (James 4:6-8). (further study: [Pride](#))
- **Rebellion:** ([1 Samuel 15:23](#)) Rebellion is typically at the core of sexual addiction because it involves rejection of God's commands regarding sexual activity, our thought-life and how we use our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:12-20). Rebellion can show up in other areas as well, including rebellion against parents, government, church, employer and any other form of authority. Rebellion refuses discipline, limitation and authority.
- **Sexual idolatry:** With the help of pornography and other "sexually charged" material people are idolizing sex now more than ever. An idol can be anything that we love or admire in excess of God. When we start making sex the focus of our thoughts and activities, we are basically making it an idol. (further study: [Sexual Idolatry](#))
- **Sexual sin:** Sex sin is basically sexual activity outside of marriage. We must also remember that sex sin can be committed in our minds just as it can be committed physically ([Matthew 5:28](#)). Specific categories include fornication, adultery, homosexuality, molestation/pedophilia, rape, bestiality and incest. For scripture refs and more info see our [sex page](#).

Other sins that often hinder freedom from sex addiction

- **Abortion:** One of the natural results of illicit sexual encounters can be unwanted pregnancies. Tragically, many couples decide to end such pregnancies by aborting the babies. Though we may be able to temporarily quell our conscience under a variety of rationalizations, the fact remains that we've participated in the taking of our child's life. The realization of this truth can be accompanied by deep shame and self-condemnation, which people may carry with them for the rest of their lives. They may feel that God could never forgive them. If you've been the mother or father of an aborted child, **you can be forgiven** for your role in that abortion through your faith in Jesus Christ. God will also help you get to the place where you can forgive yourself for this sin.
- **Involvement in "the Occult":** "The Occult" is a broad term referring to activities that seek or use knowledge and/or power from sources other than God. Examples of occult sin: sorcery, astrology, magic, witchcraft, palm-reading, fortunetelling, false religions, astral projection, mind control and spell-casting.

Unfortunately, the occult is becoming wildly popular in our culture with the help of the entertainment industry. Though many people consider occult activities harmless curiosities, the truth is that any involvement with the occult can become an entry point for spiritual oppression in our lives. God warns us for good reason to avoid *all* involvement with the occult. (more info: [the Occult](#))

- **Sexual abuse:** We hear from many people who have been sexually abused at some point in their lives. Sexual abuse often causes trauma, unwanted memories, unhealthy soul ties and unforgiveness. Recovery from sex abuse can begin through prayer by asking God to heal the emotional and spiritual wounds that were created. If unforgiveness is involved, we can ask God to give us the ability to forgive the perpetrator through the blood of Christ. Forgiving the perpetrator does not mean that we are condoning the abuse. These are often difficult issues to work through, and we encourage you to seek prayer and [Christian counseling](#) if you have been sexually abused.
- **Unforgiveness:** Bitterness, resentment and grudges are all examples of unforgiveness. Since God was willing to forgive us for our sin, we must forgive others for what they have done to us. If we do not forgive, God will not forgive us of our sin (Matthew 6:14-15)! Is there anyone that you have not forgiven? (examples: co-workers, former boss, family members, priest, pastor, former church members, abusers, etc.) (more on [unforgiveness](#))

Confession and Repentance

Take a moment to review the sin areas that you have noted from the above list. If there are any areas that you are not ready to turn away from, please ask the Lord to give you the desire to repent in those areas.

If you are ready to confess and repent, please pray the below prayers specifically for each area that you noted:

"Father God, I believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who was crucified and resurrected from the dead. I confess that I have sinned in the following ways:
_____ (list the sin). I renounce these sins and the use of my body for any sinful purpose. Please forgive me, Father, for quenching the Holy Spirit by these repeated acts of rebellion. Please cleanse me with the blood of Jesus and fill me afresh with the Holy Spirit. I receive your Spirit now. Please unite my heart to live for you in righteousness. Please sharpen my ears to hear your voice and train my eyes see the truth in the scriptures. From today forward, I will present my members as instruments for righteousness and not for sin. I rejoice in the salvation I have in you! Thank you, Father! In Jesus' name, Amen."

Note: If you experience any "spiritual resistance" that prevents or inhibits your completion of the above prayers, do not fear. For example, persons who have been

heavily involved in sex sin and/or occult sin may experience difficulty in confessing & renouncing the root sin. Symptoms may include: difficulty speaking, shortness of breath, sudden hot or cold flash, loss of train of thought, uncontrolled shaking, sudden headache or other bodily pain, heaviness, mocking thoughts or severe distraction.

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 be able to completely deal with that area.

Please [let us know](#) if you experience resistance, so we may pray for you.

Receive God's Forgiveness: If you confessed and repented from your sin, be assured that God has forgiven you and purified you of your sin (more on [receiving God's forgiveness](#)). In fact, God doesn't even remember your sin once you've confessed it. He said in Isaiah 43:25: "**I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.**" You can move forward now in securing your freedom without condemnation concerning your past!

You may have noticed that I didn't mention masturbation on this page. Masturbation often plays a key role in sex addiction, so I've created a special online course addressing it (see [Freedom from Masturbation study](#)).

Cut Free

Now that we have dealt with the sin involved in our struggle, we can address some of the potential "complicating factors" that could inhibit our walk to freedom. Not everyone will have problems in these areas, but it is helpful to at least be aware of them.

Generational sin

A person's sin can incur consequences, sometimes called "generational curses", that affect his or her descendants down to the 4th generation. The basis for this is found in [Exodus 34:6-7](#) and [other scriptures](#). These consequences can manifest in several ways,

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including sickness, tendencies toward certain sins, emotional disorders, familiar spirits and demonic oppression.

To evaluate the possibility of generational sin affecting you, [construct a family tree diagram](#), noting any patterns of sin that run down the family line. Certain types of sin, such as occult sin, sexual sin, false religion and idolatry are often the causes of generational curses.

Once we've identified generational sin, we can take our place in Christ for our family and confess the sin of our ancestors. This is basically a legal transaction where we are transferring the payment of our ancestors' sin to Christ's account. By doing so, we cancel out the effects of any generational effects that may have been caused by their sin (Galatians 3:13-14).

Here is a prayer you can pray to address generational sin:

"Heavenly Father, Thank you for the precious blood of Jesus that brings forgiveness and cleansing from sin. Thank you for redeeming me from the curse of the law and giving me new life. I take my place in Christ for my family and confess all the sins committed by my ancestors that I know of. Specifically I confess: _____(list). Father, I ask for your forgiveness and cleansing of my family and I. Please cut us free from all curses or ill effects caused by these sins. If any evil spirits have gained entry into my life on account of my ancestors' sin, I bind them in the name of Jesus Christ and command them to leave me and go to Jesus right now! Thank you Father for the freedom that is mine through Jesus. I praise you now and forever, Amen."

(further study: [Generational Sin](#))

Soul ties

A soul tie is a spiritual connection between our soul and that of another person. Soul ties are most commonly formed through sexual activity, though they can also be formed through strong emotional bonds and even idolatry. Beneficial soul ties are commonly created in marriage and healthy friendships ([Malachi 2:15](#); [Genesis 2:24](#), [1 Chronicles 12:17](#), [Colossians 2:2](#)). God intended these to strengthen our marriages, family relationships and friendships.

Harmful soul ties are created through sexual sin and abusive or unhealthy relationships. They can affect us in a variety of ways, including:

- Limit our ability to move forward with Jesus
- Cause footholds for current sin habits
- Contribute to sexual problems (ex. frigidity, promiscuity)

Take a moment to ask God in prayer to show you if you have soul ties that need to be severed. As you consider the relationships you had over the years, look at the "fruit" that they have produced in your life. Using the rule Jesus explained in [Matthew 7:16-18](#), good soul ties will bear good fruit (ex. love, blessing, fidelity, peace, joy, freedom, strengthened walk with God, etc.). Bad soul ties will bear bad fruit (ex. hatred, resentment, bondage, manipulation, anger, strife, jealousy, bitterness, fear, lust).

If the Lord brings people to mind or you think there is a possibility of a soul tie with someone, write their names down in your journal or the below table and proceed to pray to cut the soul tie.

Who the tie is with	Fruits associated with the soul tie

Pray to cut soul ties: We can ask God in prayer to cut the unhealthy soul ties in our lives. First we should identify the source and confess the sin we committed related to it. We can then ask the Lord to cut the soul ties, remove all negative effects and restore us to wholeness. If you are cutting soul ties related to an object (ex. favorite porn picture, former lover's clothing), be sure to destroy the object and remove it from your home. Here's a sample prayer:

"Father God, Thank you for saving me from destruction. I praise you for sending Jesus to die for my sins. Specifically, I confess that I have sinned in the following ways:

_____ (details of the sin & names). I repent from those sins and renounce them now. Please forgive me and cleanse my conscience with the blood of Jesus. Lord, please cut the unhealthy soul ties between me and _____ (list name (s)). Please restore me to wholeness in spirit, soul and body and reintegrate any part of me that was involved with those soul ties. I also ask for the salvation and restoration of those people that I was involved with. I commit him/her/them to your care. I rebuke any evil spirits that may have gained a foothold in me from that sin. I command you to leave me and go to Jesus Christ now! Thank you, Lord, for setting me free to live as the new person in Christ you made me to be! I praise you now and forever, Amen!" (further study: [Cut Soul Ties](#)).

Cherishing Sin

One of the problems with sexual sin is that it creates lasting memories. Those memories can then become stumbling blocks for us to continue to sin by lust and idolatry (i.e. cherishing the memories). When we cherish these sinful memories, we are create obstacles in our path to freedom that could block our prayers and ultimate healing ([Psalm 66:18](#)). If we want to gain complete victory, we will have to stop cherishing the memories of past.

Thankfully, God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us put the sinful desires of our flesh to death ([Romans 8:11,13](#)). This includes dying to the pleasure of cherishing sin memories. The first step toward healing is to identify the memories we've been cherishing. Please take a moment to ask God to bring to mind the sin memories that you've been cherishing. As they come to mind, please write them down in your journal or in the below table.

Cherished Sin Memories:

Approx. date	Who was involved	Sins committed

Now we can take our list before God in prayer to accomplish the following:

- Confess & repent for cherishing the sin memories
- Ask for help in dying to the pleasure of cherishing the memories
- Apply the blood of Jesus Christ to the memories in order to cleanse our conscience (Hebrews 9:14)
- Ask for help in seeing our sin the way he sees it - i.e. to hate it and the memories of it.

Here is a sample prayer that addresses those points:

"Father God, thank you that I can be forgiven and cleansed from my sin. I confess my sin of cherishing the memories of past sin. Specifically, I confess these memories: _____ (list). I turn away from these memories and renounce them in Jesus' name. Please forgive me and cleanse my conscience from the dead works of sin with the blood of Jesus. Lord, I commit my thoughts to You. Please strengthen me to never dwell on these memories again. By faith I have the mind of Christ and I am a new creation. I direct my thoughts to pure and wholesome things. Help me to have your view of sin, Lord. Help me to hate it and the memories of it. I invite the Holy Spirit to fill me afresh and continue the renewal process of my body, mind and spirit. Thank You, Father! I praise you in Jesus name, Amen."

After having prayed that prayer, you can tear or burn up the list of the memories. This can be an act of faith, symbolizing the cleansing of your conscience through the blood of Christ.

Moving forward, we now must exercise control over our thoughts and redirect them to pure topics whenever we're tempted to let them stray back into the areas we just prayed about. We'll discuss this more in-depth later in the study.

(further study: [Cherishing memories of sex sin](#))

Healing Prayer for the Roots of Sexual Addiction

Working through the *Deal with Sin* and the *Cut Free* sections may have surfaced some troublesome memories from the past. Though everyone has negative experiences in life, some people are more deeply damaged than others and may carry emotional scars that affect them for years to come. People can easily turn to the pleasures of sexual sin or other things (alcohol, tobacco, drugs, etc.) in attempt to medicate the pain from the scars of the past. Examples:

- An adolescent who turns to masturbation to medicate the pain of rejection he experienced from peers
- A woman who finds solace in a lesbian relationship which caters to her hatred of men, developed through years of sexual abuse from her father.
- A person who becomes promiscuous in attempt to find the love and affirmation that his or her father failed to provide during their childhood
- A man who turns to sadomasochism to punish himself for enjoying sexual abuse from a neighbor as a child
- A person who retreats to masturbation to fulfill their desire for independence from God and people, after several unpleasant sexual relationships in their teen years
- A man who rapes as an expression of the anger and revenge he harbors toward his mother who severely rejected him as a child

God's will for each of us is that we are restored to wholeness in our body, soul and spirit (Psalm 103:2-5, 3 John 1:2, Isaiah 61:1-3). God wants to help us deal with the troublesome memories and remove the current obstacles that hinder our wholeness. He wants us to enjoy life and no longer be enslaved to sin or the memories of it. Jesus confirmed this as he announced his mission on earth:

¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, ¹⁹To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4:18-19 KJV (see also Isaiah 61:1-3)

Jesus stands ready to help us and heal us from the brokenness, bruising and bondage of the past.

Identify root memories

The first step in the healing process is to find the roots that are causing or contributing to our current struggles. As in the examples above, common roots include:

- Trauma (death of loved one, horror movies, torture, rape, accidents, abortions, etc.)
- Unhealthy relationships (manipulation, control, word-curses, etc.)
- Rejection or lack of affirmation from parents, family members, friends or members of opposite sex
- Abandonment
- Betrayal
- Abuse (verbal, emotional, physical, sexual)
- Unpleasant sexual experiences
- Failure
- [Occult experiences](#) (ex. spiritualist healing, séance, fortuneteller, psychic, witchcraft, spell-casting, palm reading, coven meeting, Satanic ritual, black magic, levitation)

We can ask Jesus to reveal the root experiences that are contributing to our current problems. James wrote, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* (James 1:5 [NKJV](#)). With that in mind, here is a prayer we can pray:

“Lord Jesus, please reveal to me any root memories that are causing or contributing to the problems I am having. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.”

As you wait on the Lord, take some time to think back through your life and write down any negative memories that could be roots in the table below. Be sure to note any unusual events that occurred while you were developing in your mother's womb (examples: unwanted pregnancy, negative words spoken, parents wanted opposite gender, depression in mother, etc.). Even in the womb babies can sense rejection and other emotions in the mother or other family members.

When it happened	Brief description	Reactions it caused in you (ex. fear, pain, rejection, anger, unforgiveness, lust, self-hatred, etc.)
Early childhood (0-3)		
Pre-school (3-6)		
Grade School (7-12)		
Teen (13-19)		
College, career, marriage, etc. (20-50)		
Other		

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Preparation for prayer

Having identified the possible root memories, we can now prepare for a prayer session addressing them. Here are some things to consider as you prepare:

Pray alone or with someone? Going back to the troublesome memories can be difficult because you are revisiting the wounds that occurred. Having a loving brother or sister in the Lord can help strengthen you and encourage you as you face the memories. It will be best if such persons are sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and have faith in the current healing work of Jesus Christ. If you're not ready to break secrecy with a prayer partner about your struggles, the Lord will still work with you. He will lead you in the healing process as you are able to deal with each area.

Where to pray: A peaceful location is best for prayer. Since dealing with unpleasant memories can be upsetting, choose a private place that will have minimal distractions. It will also help to create a "God-focused" atmosphere in the location you choose. For example, prior to prayer you might play some worship CD's in the room or recite psalms of praise or other scriptures.

How many sessions? If you have several memories to deal with, you may need more than one prayer session. Allow sufficient time for each prayer session. An hour or so will be probably the most you'll want to tackle in a session, as this kind of prayer can be exhausting.

What to expect: God can work in many different ways in a prayer session. Peace will characterize whatever the Lord does in you, so you need not fear that he will violently "possess" you or force you to do something you're not ready to do. Sometimes during these prayer sessions Jesus will take people back to the memory in a type of vision and comfort them with his presence. He may give them a new perspective on the event that helps them process what happened and heal from the wounds it caused. In some cases, people "rest in the Spirit." This is where the Lord may temporarily place you in a relaxed, conscious state while he heals you in many areas simultaneously. This may also be referred to as "spiritual surgery." If this happens to you, do not fear. God is the God of peace and uses such experiences to speed up the healing process. Other people may not sense anything happening at all while they pray, but later may discover that the sting of the memories has been removed by the Lord.

What to Pray

Taking your list of root memories from the above section, you can now go to Jesus in prayer and ask for healing for each memory. I suggest using a simple set of prayers that include:

- Confessing sin related to the memory that you have not previously confessed
- Asking Jesus to heal you from any binding effects of the memory
- Asking Jesus to heal the inner wounds (conscious or subconscious states) that still affect your life
- Asking God to fill you with his love, peace and joy

Here is an example prayer that you can use for each memory:

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are God and that you are a rewarder of those who diligently seek you. I believe that you are the God who heals. I take authority over every spirit or power that is not of God and I bind them from interfering in any way during this prayer session. I declare this room and this temple (or body) as holy ground, dedicated to Jesus Christ exclusively. I release the peace of God in this place and in my mind right now.

Lord, I lift up this memory of _____ to you now. I confess any sin that I committed in conjunction with this memory: _____(specify). If I have harbored any unforgiveness toward the people involved, I now forgive them. Please forgive me and cleanse me from my sin. Thank you, Jesus!

I ask that you please heal me from any binding effects that this memory has had on my life. Please heal all the inner wounds from this memory that continue to affect me today, consciously or subconsciously. Please help me to see that incident from your perspective and no longer rehearse the pains of the past. I release that memory to your care right now.

(Pause and take some time now to pray silently and/or pray in the Spirit, waiting on the Lord)

Lord, please now fill me afresh with your love, peace and joy. I receive your life and healing in my body, soul and spirit.

(Again, pause and take some time to pray silently and/or pray in the Spirit, and receive from the Lord)

Thank you, dear Jesus, for all that you have done in me today. I praise you and glorify your name! Amen.”

As you pray through each memory, be patient and don't try to rush the Lord. The Lord will help you know when you've received healing and are ready to move forward in the *Freedom Journey I* study. This will typically be indicated by your ability through Christ to face the reality of each memory without the pain, fear, anger, bitterness, or other negative emotions that you previously had.

Because of the potential heaviness and other negative emotions that can be stirred up inside us as a result of this type of prayer, I highly recommend that you pray a "Cutting Free" prayer following these exercises. Here is an example:

"Lord God, thank you for this time of prayer and healing. Please cut me free from all heaviness, sadness and negativity that may have been stirred up inside me as a result of these prayers. Please wash my conscience with the blood of Jesus and help me to not place any undue focus on the memories we have worked on today. Please help me to fix my thoughts on you, Lord, and now move forward in my walk with you. Come Holy Spirit, renew me, fill me with your power, life and joy. Strengthen me where I have felt weak and clothe me with your light. Also, Lord God, please send your holy angels to minister to me. I praise you and thank you, in Jesus' name, Amen."

Clean House

The Bible discusses the importance of removing "detestable" objects from our homes in several passages. For example, God told the Israelites, "**Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction**" (Deuteronomy 7: 26). God repeated this warning in several other scriptures: [2 Kings 23:24](#); [Deuteronomy 13:17](#); [Joshua 6:18](#); [Joshua 7:1](#). These warnings were for good reason. He did not want his people to experience the unpleasant consequences associated with those objects.

Modern day examples of detestable objects include pornography in all its forms and things associated with the "[the Occult](#)." God wants us to have nothing to do with these things primarily because they are forms of [idolatry](#). He jealously yearns for our total devotion (James 4:4-5). Keeping such things in our homes dishonors God, creates a potential snare for sin and gives the enemy an open door to attack us. The sensible thing to do is to purge our homes of all detestable objects that we know of and/or that God reveals to us.

Before you start cleaning out your house, please take a moment to ask God to give you wisdom on what to remove. Suggested prayer: "Lord God, please show me the things in my home that are not pleasing to you. Please convict me of what I should do with them. Thank you, Father, Amen."

The below suggestions come from our own "house cleaning" experiences over the years. We've gone through about 4 of them since we started serving the Lord. You may find that after getting rid of the obvious things, God may later show you other objects that

need to go. I encourage you to cooperate fully with the Holy Spirit and follow through on the convictions he gives you.

One of the challenges we faced in our house cleanings was the desire to sell the detestable objects to recover the value, or at least give them to someone who could use them. The Lord showed us that either course would only help others to fall into sin. Therefore, we recommend that you destroy the objects and resist temptations to sell or give them away. By destroying them, you are making a sacrifice to God similar to what the people in Acts did by burning their magic books ([Acts 19:19](#)).

House-cleaning suggestions:

Change your computer setup:

- Change internet access and email accounts to a [filtered internet provider](#) & have a friend install and keep custody of the password
- Install a content [filter](#) & have a friend install and keep custody of the password
- Move your computer into an open location
- Purge your computer files of all porn images/programs
- Erase all porn sites from your "favorites" folder in your internet browser
- Delete all cookie files
- Disable "cookie file" use on your web browser (banner "teaser" ads sometimes query your cookie files)
- Run a clean-up program to ensure all the internet clutter is gone (ex. like Norton Systemworks)
- Install a [pop-up add blocking program](#)
- Install a text-only browser (like Lynx) if search engine pictures are causing you to fall to temptation

Other actions:

- Destroy any porn literature that you have
- Destroy magazines that are sources of temptation
- Cancel subscriptions to any mailing list you are on that produces material you lust over
- Cancel your cable television service or at least downsize it to exclude channels that offer porn or sexually explicit entertainment (ex. HBO, Cinemax, MTV).
- Destroy porn and other sexually explicit or violent videos (ex. rated "R" videos usually fit this category)
- Destroy books and objects of the [occult](#) (ex. Ouija boards, New Age crystals, dream catchers, good luck charms, Masonic rings, Tarot cards, magic books, doctrinal books of non-Christian religions)

- Destroy clothing associated with past sexual sin
- Destroy video games that depict sinful acts for entertainment and/or contain images that cause you to lust (violence, murder, sex, magic, spell-casting, etc.)
- Destroy letters and pictures of people you have committed sexual sin with (if you are still cherishing the sin you committed with them)

After you've cleaned out your house, please take time to ask God's forgiveness for having kept the detestable objects in your home. Suggested prayer:

"Heavenly Father, I confess that I have kept these detestable objects in my home. Please forgive me for this. I renounce my possession of those objects and turn from them now to pursue Jesus wholeheartedly. In the name of Jesus, I break any curse or foothold that may have been created as a result of my having those objects. Thank you, Lord, that I am cleansed and forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

Fill the House

Now that you have cleaned your house, fill it with good things that will point you to God and encourage wholesome living. Consider Colossians 3:1-2 [NIV](#): "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." We can bolster a "God-focused" heart and mindset by what we keep in our homes and what we do for entertainment.

We can ask God to give us wisdom on what actions to take in filling our homes. Here is a suggested prayer: "Lord God, I desire to set my mind on things above, not on carnal things. Please give me wisdom about how and what to fill my home with. Thank you, Lord, Amen."

House-filling suggestions:

- Pray over your home, TV, VCR, DVD player and computer. Dedicate them to God's purposes and renounce any sinful use they may have had in the past. As an added measure, anoint these areas & objects with oil in the name of the Lord (see [anointing](#)).
- Recite key Bible passages in your home during your quiet time and any other times throughout the day. Speaking the Word of God in your home sets a positive "spiritual atmosphere" that helps repel the forces of evil.
- Speak positive words in your home; resist the temptation to speak evil of other people
- Post Bible verses in key places (ex. computer monitor, bedroom, bathroom, workshop, office) and review/recite them often (see [temptation verses](#))

- Play and/or sing [praise & worship](#) music in your home as often as possible. [Praise](#) music helps establish a spiritual protective covering over you and helps you focus on God.
- Tune your radio and TV to Christian stations; minimize exposure to secular stations
- Listen to teaching tapes and read books that encourage you in your walk with Jesus (see [suggested books, tapes & CD's](#))
- Invest in wholesome videos/DVD's: They can be a challenge to find, but they do exist. Look for programs that edify the family and affirm biblical values. Avoid violence, foul language, sexual themes, etc. - these things can easily wear down our resolve to live for God and weaken our faith.
- Make time for rest: While this isn't a physical house-filler, it is something that should be part of our weekly schedule and may often occur at home. God's word says, "**Be still and know that I am God**" (Psalm 46:10 [NIV](#)) and he specifically commands us to take a day of holy rest each week (i.e. the Sabbath) in Exodus 20:8-11. Rest will help us focus on God and will also benefit every other area of our lives.
- Make your home a place of peace: Peace will help maximize our times of rest at home. Just as the disciples sent their peace to the homes they stayed in (Luke 10:4-6), we too can send God's peace to our homes. We can say, "[I speak the peace of Christ to my home and everyone in it.](#)" Through Christ we can expect supernatural improvement of the peace in our home. We can contribute to this peace by periodically silencing the various noisemakers (radio, TV, computer, phone, etc.) and devoting time to prayer.

Personal Application Questions

- What detestable objects have you found in your home?
- Have you discarded those objects? If not, when will you discard them?
- Did you find any things that you are not willing to give up? If so, please take a moment to ask God to give you the conviction and strength to give them up.
- Please list the actions you plan to take to fill your house.

Old Self New Self

The Bible talks about the daily discipline of putting off our "old self" and putting on our "new self" in Christ. This is a skill that is critical to maintaining our freedom from sin. It is something that we'll be perfecting for the rest of our earthly lives. Paul wrote:

²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of

your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24 [NIV](#)

The old self must be put off, because it is being corrupted by sinful desires and will otherwise lead us back into sin. Simultaneously, we must put on the new self and be "made new in the attitude" of our minds. Note that it is our responsibility to put off the old and put on the new, while God renews us in the attitude our minds.

How to put off the old self

Putting off the old self is synonymous with putting it to death. The old self is the part of us that is continually trying to pull us back into sinful habits and thought patterns ([Romans 6:11-14](#)). The lure of the old self can be powerful, especially when our memories remind us of the pleasures of past sin. Here are some suggestions on how to put off the old self:

- **Ask for help:** Too often people try to resist temptations by sheer will-power. As Christians, we have the source of ultimate power and assistance available to us: Jesus. He knows the temptations we face (Hebrews 2:18) and **will help us** resist those temptations ([Hebrews 4:15-16](#)). Each day we can pray, "Dear Jesus, please help me put off the old self and put on the new self today. Please help me overcome any temptations that come my way. Thank you, Jesus. Amen."
- **Reckon yourself with Jesus:** Reckoning with Jesus is basically aligning ourselves with him and his condition: dead to sin and alive to God. Paul wrote, "**Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord**" (Romans 6:11 [NKJV](#)). A way to reckon with Jesus is to recite key Bible verses about our condition. For example, using Romans 6:11 we can declare, "I am dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus my Lord." Here are some other verses we can declare:

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Galatians 2:20 [NKJV](#)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 [NKJV](#)

¹There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2 [NKJV](#)

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. 1 Peter 2:24 [NKJV](#)

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4 [NKJV](#)

- **Stop letting sin dictate your actions:** This is where we follow-up our faith with action. Since we believe ourselves dead to sin, we must no longer respond to its temptations. The two primary areas that we can focus on are our eyes and thoughts. For example, if we're watching a television show that we know contains tempting material, we can choose to switch channels or simply turn the TV off. Or, if a memory of a past sexual encounter comes to mind, we can shift our thoughts to another topic instead of fantasizing over the memory. We'll further discuss eye and thought discipline later in this study.

Another aspect of this found in the ways that we have been making provisions to gratify lust. Paul wrote, "**Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts**" (Romans 13:14 [NKJV](#)). Some examples of making provision for lust are: hiding a favorite porn magazine or image file, keeping an adult video store membership card, going to places where we know we'll be tempted, flirting on the job or with our neighbors, keeping unfiltered internet access or keeping a favorite list of porn sites on the computer. Leaving such unlocked doors for the enemy will likely lead us back into bondage at some point. The key is to remove the obvious things that could tempt us to fall back in sin. Solomon wrote, "**A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is arrogant and careless**" (Proverbs 14:16 [NASB](#)).

Exercise: Take a moment to identify the ways that you've been making provision for lust in your life. Next, consider what actions you can take to eliminate each provision. You can ask God to help you in doing this: "**Dear Lord, Please reveal the ways I've been making provision for lust in my life and show me how to eliminate each item. Thank you, Father. Amen.**" Feel free to use the below table to record your findings:

How I've made provision for lust	What I can do to stop making this provision

- Identify triggers and make alternate plans:** Sex addiction often follows a pattern that revolves around certain triggers that lead a person to act out. As you consider the above list, ask God to help you recognize any triggers that were involved. Some examples of triggers are rejection, failure, stress, anger, resentment, trauma and unpleasant memories. As we consider the triggers we commonly face, we can then consider how to "run to Jesus" in those situations instead of acting out sexually. For example, when we feel the pain of rejection, we can recite scriptures that reassure us of God's love for us or recall the rejection that Jesus endured on the cross for us. Here again, we can ask God for wisdom on the actions to take: "Dear Lord, please help me discover the triggers that have led me to act out. Please show me what I can do to run to you and not respond by acting out. Thank you, Father. Amen." Feel free to use the below table to record your findings.

Triggers	How I can run to Jesus when this happens

How to put on the new self

Our new self is the person that God created us to be. This new self is "**created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness**" (Ephesians 4:24 [NIV](#)). God gives us the ability through the Holy Spirit to live in the reality of the new self (Romans 8:11). There are some basic actions we can take to put on the new self each day:

- **Respond to the Spirit's impulses:** Just as our sinful desires led us in living for sin, the Holy Spirit will lead us in living for God. The Spirit does this in several ways, including convicting us of sin and guiding us in making right choices. He often speaks to people in a "still, small voice," but may use other means as well (scripture, audible voice, an "inner prompting," circumstances, prophecy, etc.). Recognizing God's voice is a skill that will come with practice. Jesus said, "**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me**" (John 10:27 [NKJV](#)). As a general guideline, God will not tell us to do something that is contrary to his commandments in the scriptures.

When God speaks to us (and we know it is him), it is vital to heed what he tells us, no matter how insignificant the instructions may seem. Sometimes God uses seemingly mundane situations to test our willingness to obey him. A friend of mine was getting discouraged because he hadn't heard from God in a long time. One day as he was driving down the highway at lunch time, he craved a McDonald's hamburger, but couldn't remember the exit number of the restaurant. "Lord, please help me remember where the McDonald's is," he prayed. Very plainly the Spirit said to him, "Take this exit, now!" Though he didn't think that was the right exit, he obeyed and discovered that it was the right exit after all. That little incident helped strengthen my friend's faith that God was still with him and cared for him.

- **Study the Word:** God has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our *knowledge* of him (2 Peter 1:3-4 [NIV](#)). We learn (i.e. increase knowledge) about God and his promises by studying the Bible. His promises are the foundational truths that we can stand on in faith. They enable us to escape the corruption of sin and live as new persons (2 Peter 1:4; John 8:31-32).

There are many possible ways to study the Bible, but in general it is best to develop a daily habit of Bible study, including scripture memory work. There is no shortcut to learning the scriptures, but the time and effort you put in will strengthen your faith and bolster your walk with Christ. I'll offer suggestions on this in the next section ([Quiet Times](#)).

- **Connect with God through prayer:** [Prayer](#) is our communication link with God, who is available to us 24/7. The Bible encourages us to practice continuous prayer. Paul wrote, "**Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you**" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Jesus spent a good bit of his time in prayer as he faced the various challenges of ministry and living a sinless life. If it was important for Jesus to pray, how much more so is it for us to pray!
- **Plug in to a good church:** God wants us to be in regular contact with other Christians so that the body of Christ is functioning with all its parts. Paul described this as being "knit together in love" (Colossians 1:2 [NKJV](#)). Hebrews 10:24-25 [NKJV](#) says, "**Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**" Plugging in to a good church provides key benefits that will help us in our walk with Christ, including prayer support, teaching in the Word, encouragement in our faith, development of our spiritual gifts, opportunities to serve, deliverance ministry, mentoring, corporate worship, fellowship and spiritual protection/covering. ([more info on finding a good church](#))
- **Serve others in love:** We want to get in the habit of using our freedom to serve others (instead of ourselves) in love as God directs. Paul wrote in Galatians 5:13, "**For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.**" If we use our freedom to serve others in love, we'll have far less time to get back into our old sin habits. For example, if we stop spending our evenings surfing for porn on the internet, we'll now have some time freed up. We can use that time to help others in some way, such as: helping your children with their homework, spending time with your spouse, calling a friend to encourage them or volunteering at the homeless shelter. Please take a moment to ask God to give you some ideas of how you might serve others in love.

Ideas on how I can serve others in love

- **Practice quick repentance:** The devil uses guilt and shame to keep people from immediately returning to God following a stumble in sin. As we learn to control our body and discipline our mind, it's probable that there will be some failures along the way. If this happens, we need not wallow in shame, but repent, get

back on our feet and keep walking on the path of purity. Our Master paid for our sins and extends grace and mercy to us. (see [Receive Forgiveness](#))

Before proceeding to the next page of the study, please take a moment to review your answers to the questions on this page. Ask God to help you make the needed changes that will help you put off the old self and put on the new self daily.

Quiet Times

Our daily transformation into the new self will hinge upon a daily devotion time with God. This is often referred to as a "quiet time." The quiet time helps us get connected with God, learn his word and worship him. If we want to walk in enduring freedom, we will have to be having regular quiet times.

Suggestions for effective quiet times:

- Find a quiet place with no (or minimal) distractions
- Have it in the morning: If you start the day with God, you are more likely to live for Him during the rest of the day.
- Choose a posture that won't cause you to fall asleep
- Pray for peace: "Father, I come to meet with you this morning. Please send your peace to my mind and this place. I bind all evil spirits seeking to distract me, in Jesus' name. Amen."
- Be flexible: Don't feel that you have to do the same thing every quiet time. Allow the Lord to lead you and show you what he wants you to do each day.

Main activities to include in your quiet time

Praise and worship God: Praise and worship helps set our minds on God for the day. It also glorifies God and establishes a protective spiritual covering over us. Thanksgiving is a key ingredient in praise and worship. The Psalmist writes, "**Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name**" in Psalm 100:4 [NKJV](#). We should approach God in thanksgiving as we praise and worship him.

There are many ways to express thanksgiving. We can start by thanking God for every good thing he has done in our life. When I thank God, I go through areas like my salvation in Christ, health, family, possessions, freedom from addiction, power for living, love God has for me, and identity as a son of God. I find that I have many things to be thankful for!

Worshipping God is something we do by how we live, how we use our bodies and how we think. Our worship in the quiet time should be the start of an all-day activity. Here are some suggestions for worshipping God in the quiet time:

- **Read the Word aloud:** I find that reading some psalms is a great way to worship God. Psalms often express praise and worship of the Lord. This helps me set my mind on God.
- **Sing:** The primary reason God gave us a voice is to sing to him! Singing along with a worship CD is a great way to praise God. When I sing, I try to concentrate on the meaning of the words, and avoid distractions. I find that it is helpful to close my eyes and imagine myself in God's throne room as I sing. After all, if I was singing for the leader of my country, I'd be focused on doing a good job. How much more so for the Creator of the universe!
- **Use your body:** Our bodies are "for the Lord" (1 Corinthians 6:13). Don't be afraid to use your body to express your worship. In the Psalms, worship is expressed in many ways, including raising the hands, clapping, proclaiming, singing, playing instruments and dancing. If you feel like doing some of these things, don't restrain yourself. It's acceptable to make a complete fool of yourself before the Lord ([2 Samuel 6:13-15](#)). This helps you shed off any pride you might have. It also opens the door for the Lord to touch your life with joy and gladness. See our [praise](#) page for more info.

Pray: [Prayer](#) is our communication link with God. Prayer connects us with God, the source of the life and power we need to walk in purity. We can't afford to be disconnected from God! Are you talking to God on a regular basis? If you do not, the quiet time is a great place to begin. Here are some suggested things to pray:

- Confess your recent sins (known and unknown) and ask God's forgiveness through Jesus.
- Tell God how much you love him and appreciate the sacrifice Jesus made for you
- Submit your requests to God, while thanking him for what he's already done for you
- Ask God to help you continue cast off the old sinful self and put on the new self in Christ
- Ask for God's will to be done in your life today
- In the name of Jesus, bind up any plans Satan may have against you for today
- Pray for other people's needs as they come to mind
- Pray about miscellaneous topics as the Lord brings them to your mind
- Present your body to God as an instrument for righteousness ([Romans 6:13](#)) and not for sin. Here is one that I often pray:

"My body is a temple for the Holy Spirit, redeemed, cleansed, and sanctified by the Blood of Jesus. My members, the parts of my body, are instruments of righteousness, yielded to God for His service and for His glory. The devil has no place in me, no power over me, no unsettled claims against me. All has been settled by the Blood of Jesus. I overcome Satan by the Blood of the Lamb and by the word of my testimony, and I love not my life unto death. My body is for the Lord and the Lord is for my body." Amen" (*Reprinted from Derek Prince Ministries Intl.*)

Don't feel that you need to talk the whole time. It's good to allow some silent time in case God wants to speak to you! Sometimes just being quiet before the Lord can bring tremendous peace, comfort and revelation.

Pray expectantly, knowing that your requests are being heard and acted on by God. God may choose to answer your prayer differently from what you asked, or in a different time frame than you expected. Don't allow that to hinder your faith. When you combine faith with prayer, things will start to happen!

Study the Bible: Jesus said that he was the "bread of life," and encouraged his followers to feed on his flesh. He said in John 6:56, **"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."** He was talking spiritually, and meant that our spiritual bodies need daily nourishment from the Bible. If we don't feed our spiritual body, we can't expect to have strength to fight the spiritual battles of temptation.

The scriptures tell us everything we need to know living in purity ([2 Peter 1:3-4](#), [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). The Bible contains the promises of God that we can stand on in faith. The promises also serve as weapons with which we can fight temptations. If we don't know the promises, we will have a hard time standing in freedom and fighting the devil. When Jesus faced the devil in the wilderness, he quoted scripture exclusively to defeat him ([Luke 4](#)).

The Bible serves another important function. It helps re-program our minds with God's plan for healthy living. Our daily life in the world can easily erode our conscience and convictions concerning sin. The Bible helps renew our conscience. It helps us better discern between good and evil.

Consider what God told Joshua as he prepared to enter the promised land: **"Do not let this Book of Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful"** (Joshua 1:8 [NIV](#)). As with Joshua, God's word will help us be prosperous and successful. It will also help us keep our way pure. Consider Psalm 119:9-11 [NIV](#): **"9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. 10 I seek**

you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. ¹¹ I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." With the word loaded into our hearts, we have an added safeguard against falling into sin.

Before you begin reading your Bible, pray that God will open your eyes and teach you. Ask God to open your spiritual ears and eyes to His Word. Then, as you read, look for aspects that ring true for your situation. If you have difficulty understanding the Bible, you may want to obtain an easy-to-read translation. Examples include the New Living Translation, the Amplified Bible and the New King James version.

In my quiet time, I read at least one chapter from the New Testament and then one from the Old Testament. I have found it beneficial to pick out a theme I want to learn more about. Some example themes I have studied include Moses, Joshua, the healing ministry of Jesus, lust, sex sin, the new man in Christ and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is really no limit to the possible studies you can do. Though devotional books are sometimes helpful, I encourage you to study the Bible directly during the quiet time. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and give you understanding about what you are reading.

After God delivered me completely from sex addiction, the scriptures became "alive" to me. I found a tremendous amount of the Bible that I could relate to in a new way. The Bible has many passages about rescue, deliverance, healing, renewal and restoration, all of which applied to my situation. I believe God also desires to teach you through His word about the new life He has for you. He wants to deliver you, heal you, renew you and shape you into a new person through Jesus. The Bible is the essential textbook for that process!

Journal: The journal is a great tool to keep track of your walk with God. Consider what one of our visitors wrote:

"I had started a journal when I started the [Freedom Journey](#). I noticed that when I started slacking in being involved each day with journal entries that some of my thoughts from the past that I wanted to get rid of started coming back. I just wanted others to know that if they are serious about breaking their bondage to whatever addiction or sin that they may have, that being involved with their journal and placing prayers or bible passages in it will strengthen their faith and help them remain committed each day so that their previous addictions will lose their foothold."

I begin each day's entry with some comments about what God has been teaching me. I then take notes on the Bible chapters I read, jotting down any verses that stand out to me. I write some of these verses on 3X5 note cards to review later for memory. I also put a star next to any special revelations the Lord gives me in my reading. Periodically I will review my past journal entries, paying special attention the star-marked notes. This

can be a great encouragement, especially when I'm feeling depressed or unsure of where I'm headed.

Personal Application Questions

- Take a moment to write a brief self-assessment of your quiet times with God.
 - What areas need improvement, considering the main areas mentioned on this page?
 - If you are not having regular daily quiet times, what excuses have been standing in your way?
 - Please take your excuse list before God in prayer right now. Confess your neglect to God. Ask him to rekindle the passion in your heart to meet with him. Ask him to help you make it a priority to meet with him, no matter what.
 - Take a moment to write down the steps you will take from this point on to ensure that you have daily quiet times.
-

Break Secrecy

It's a natural tendency for us to want to hide our sin. Adam and Eve attempted to hide from God as soon as they sinned and we're no different. The devil plays on that tendency, using lies to persuade us to cover our sin with secrecy. Some common lies the devil uses are:

- "They won't understand"
- "They'll judge me"
- "They can't help me anyhow" or "I don't need their help"
- "They don't know what it's like to be me"
- "They can't handle the truth - it will hurt them too deeply"

If we believe the lies, we will likely withdraw and disconnect from God and the people in our life. The truth is that we cannot afford to be cut off from these potential help sources. Our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). When we allow ourselves to be isolated, we're like the weak gazelle that gets separated from the rest of the herd. Eventually it becomes lunch for the lions!

What's so dangerous about keeping my struggle secret?

Secrecy brings us under the devil's influence: Secrecy is deception and deception is the work of the devil who is the "Father of Lies" ([John 8:44](#)). When we engage in deception, we open a door to the devil's influence in our life. God wants us to have

truth in our “innermost being” ([Psalm 51:6](#)). When we hide things in secrecy, we are giving lies a place in our innermost being.

Secrecy opens the door to fear. Sexual sin is powerful fuel for fear. Typical fears faced by sex addicts include:

- Fear of being found out
- Fear of divorce
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of losing my job
- Fear of losing my friends’ respect
- Fear of having to give up my pet sin

Our natural tendency is to respond to the fear by trying to avoid these situations. To do this, we’ll likely dive deeper into secrecy (and deeper into our sin habit) to medicate the fear.

Secrecy causes physical problems. Living a double life will wear us down physically, emotionally and spiritually. For example, in [Psalm 32:3-5](#) David described what happened when he kept his sin secret. David’s bones, energy and emotions were all damaged by his secrecy until he confessed his sin. There are many other possible physical problems that could arise from staying in secrecy (stress, ulcers, etc.).

Secrecy blocks blessing: God will not bless us when we’re covering our sins. Proverbs 28:13 confirms this: **“He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”**

It is best for us to break secrecy! Regardless of our situation, it is best to break secrecy by confiding with someone we know. The obvious question is “Who should I tell?” We encourage you to consider this question with much prayer. Some people may be better able to handle the revelation of your sin than others. Ideally, you’ll want to share your situation with a Christian who is walking closely with the Lord. This is because they then can pray for you and give you Godly encouragement to continue through your walk to freedom.

If you are married, you have another major decision to consider. At some point, you *will* need to tell your spouse about your struggle. Because sexual sin can be devastating to a marriage, we urge caution and prayerful preparation prior to sharing this with your spouse. Don’t think that you’ll be able to get free and never have to tell your spouse about your former life. Since you are one with her/him in body and spirit, **you can’t afford to keep this truth from your spouse.** Withholding your secret struggle from them is tantamount to harboring lies in your inmost parts ([Psalm 51:6](#)). Sharing the *whole* truth will be essential for the rebuilding of your intimacy and marriage sex

life. If you have previously told a trusted Christian friend about your situation, they can cover you in prayer when you sense it is God's timing to tell your spouse.

Accountability relationships: Places to break secrecy

Accountability relationships can be excellent places to break secrecy and encourage one another in our walk with Jesus. By "accountability," I'm referring a loving relationship (non-sexual) between same-gender Christians that is meant to mutually encourage and strengthen each other in their pursuit of God. These relationships can exist in a one-on-one or in a small group (3-5 persons) format. Ideally the persons involved should meet periodically throughout each month to stay in tune with how things are going with those in the group. These are not performance-oriented relationships. If a person falls to sin once, the relationship should not be in jeopardy. It is probable that all of us will fall in sin one time or another. The accountability relationship provides a safety net to help get us back on track and keep walking with Jesus.

There are several scriptures that support the need for accountability relationships:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: "⁹ Two *are* better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls, For *he has* no one to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm *alone*? ¹² Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken." (NKJV)

Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (NKJV)

James 5:16: "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another..." (NKJV)

Proverbs 15:31: "He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise." (NIV)

Proverbs 27:17: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." (NKJV)

The story Jonathan and his armor bearer makes a great analogy for accountability groups ([1 Samuel 14:6-14](#)). In the story, Jonathan and his armor bearer scaled a steep cliff and defeated a Philistine garrison of 20 men. They were united in purpose, faith in God and desire to serve God. As Jonathan attacked the enemy, his armor bearer stayed with him, guarding his back. As the Philistines fell before Jonathan, his armor-bearer killed them. Applying this to accountability relationships, we all need armor bearers to help us fight the spiritual battles of life. The walk with Jesus was not intended to be a one-man show. We need to be connected with those in the body of Christ as a team. We need people who will stand with us in battle and cover our back. Also, we need to be willing to be armor bearers for others in their battles.

Qualities of a successful accountability relationship: I've been involved in several accountability relationships. Some of them were good and others not so good. I've highlighted some qualities of successful accountability groups below.

Truth: This may be the biggest challenge week in and week out. The group members must fight the temptation to gloss over what is really going on in their lives. If people aren't being real about what is going on, then the group will lose effectiveness. It may be difficult to admit that we're struggling, but it's even more difficult to admit when we've failed.

Love: Love will keep the relationship alive and free from any "legalistic" turns. Love is quick to listen and slow to speak. I've found it's often a temptation to want to give advice and a quick fix. People don't always want or need my advice, but they do want me to listen to them.

Tough Questions: Tough questions will help keep us from glossing over the core issues. Here are some examples:

- Did you look at porn this week?
- Did you masturbate this week?
- Did you take actions to avoid a repeat scenario of how you fell?
- What can I do to help you avoid or escape the triggers that lead you to sin?
(phone call; prayer; lunch, etc.)
- What areas can I address in prayer for you during this week?
- Have you lied to me in any of the above answers?

Loving Correction: Correction can be crucial to the overall success of an accountability relationship. Paul wrote, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" in Romans 12:10-1 NASB. When a person lags in their diligence by falling into sin, how will the accountability partner(s) react? Will they just brush over it and hope that it doesn't happen again, or will they take the issue head on and ask the person to account for what happened? I suggest that if they brush over the sin, it will be bound to happen again. If a person truly loves his friend, he'll take action to address the sin.

Corrective action should be taken with a "gentle," humble attitude. Paul wrote:

¹Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ²Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴Each one should test his own actions... Galatians 6:1-4 NIV

With that in mind, here's a possible approach to use:

- Ask the person explain how/why the failure happened
- Analyze the chain of events and brainstorm with the person to determine how to prevent future failures
- Encourage the person to move forward and return to living for God (by not embracing the sin any longer)
- Offer to help in any way possible (prayer, check-up calls, etc.)

One of the misconceptions of accountability relationships is that they somehow give people special power to break sin's grip on the soul. Jesus really is the only reliable power source for breaking addiction, and effective accountability groups are those that point people to Jesus for power and transformation. In and of themselves, the groups can't stop a person from sinning. It is the person empowered by the Holy Spirit who chooses to obey God rather than sin who will gain victory over addiction.

Unfortunately, there are times when even the best of accountability relationships don't work out. In the event that a person continues to fall back into sin over and over, it might be time to disband. I encountered such a situation with a friend who I was meeting with for about three years. We met together, prayed together and did Bible studies together. There were many times when it seemed like he was making progress in his relationship with God, only to later fall back into his old addiction patterns. I felt it was time to suspend meeting when he refused to break secrecy with his wife about the problem.

When no progress is being made, it may be time to consider doing what Paul did in 1 Corinthians 5:1-11:

¹It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. ²And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? ³Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. ⁴When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the

power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

⁶Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? ⁷Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. (NIV)

Breaking off a relationship with someone who is continuing in habitual sin may seem like a harsh thing to do, and it may not be a pleasant experience. Even so, good can come out of it, especially if one releases the person to God's care and continues to pray for them. The person that Paul discussed on the above passage eventually repented and returned to the church (2 Corinthians 2:5-9).

Who to meet with? We encourage you to seek God's guidance for this. You obviously want to be cautious about who you approach. Look for someone who is interested in living for God. Pray for God's prompting and confirmation as you go forward. If you are not sure about where to look for a potential group, your church may be a good place to start. If you are waiting for someone at church to invite you to join a small group or be an accountability partner, you may have a long wait! Often it will require you to take the initiative, pick up the phone and do the leg work in finding or forming a group.

Can my spouse be my accountability partner? Unless you are walking in sexual purity right now, I recommend that you do not make your spouse your accountability partner. This is primarily because of the emotional "re-wounding" that can occur if you fall back into your sex sin habit regularly.

Personal Application Questions:

- Have you allowed yourself to be isolated from God and/or the body of Christ because of your sin? If so, what steps will you take to get re-connected?
- Have you told someone close to you about your secret sin yet? If not, what are the excuses you are using for not doing so?
- How many of those excuses are based on truth?

- Are you willing to surrender to God any fears you may have about breaking secrecy? If so, please take a moment and speak to the Lord in prayer about your fears. A suggested prayer is, "Father, I confess that I have allowed the fear of _____(list) to control me and keep me in secrecy. Please help me break the power of fear and have the courage to break secrecy. Thank you, Father! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."
 - If you are not ready to break secrecy, please make a note in your calendar for next month to reconsider the decision. Continued secrecy will only hinder your walk to freedom.
 - Are you involved in an accountability relationship right now? What steps will you take to get connected with a group?
 - If there are no accountability groups in your area, would you consider starting your own group?
-

Train Eyes

Our eyes are powerful receptors that can quickly corrupt our thoughts with evil. If fill our eyes with porn, the images become the memories we lust over. We can be porn addicts long after we stop looking at porn! Jesus explained, "The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." (Luke 11:34-36 [NKJV](#)). When we look at evil things with our eyes, our minds are filled with that evil and our reflection of Jesus is obscured.

High standards: Consider God's standard for his own eyes. Habakkuk said of God, "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong" (Habakkuk 1:13 [NKJV](#)). As God's adopted sons in Christ (Romans 8:14-17), we are called to his standard of purity for our eyes. Peter wrote, "as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:15 [NKJV](#)). Since God commands us to be holy, we really have no excuse for filling our eyes with evil. Disobeying God with our eyes is tantamount to pride, i.e. that we think we know better than God. When we allow pride to creep into our life, we cut ourselves off from God's help. James 4:6-7 says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" ([NKJV](#)). We need God's help in order to walk in freedom!

Television, movies, magazines and computers can easily fill our eyes and ears with unlimited depictions of evil. These depictions cause memories that will hinder or block our progress toward obeying God. We must shut them off! Isaiah said, "...[He] who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will

dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure" (Isaiah 33:15-16 [NKJV](#)). If we want to live in God's favor and blessing, we will have to remove the sources of evil we are viewing.

Change our plans: We can eliminate many temptations by simply not planning to do things that will feed our lusts. Romans 13:14 says, "**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**" Each of us has certain triggers that can lead us into addictive behavior. The key is to recognize the triggers and avoid them ahead of time. Some examples:

- If you know you'll be alone tonight and will be able to surf for porn on the net, invite a friend over so you don't have the opportunity to get into trouble.
- If you are headed to the beach and are prone to lusting after people in swimsuits, try going when there will be few people, or leave your glasses at home (if you wear glasses), or just stay home.
- If you lust over the magazine covers at the supermarket checkout area, pick something to focus your eyes on in the checkout area that will keep you from looking at the magazine covers.
- If you are tempted by the magazine rack at the convenience store check-out counter, go to an alternate store that doesn't display the magazines where you'll be tempted (or doesn't have the magazines at all)
- If you are falling because of porn solicitations on email, switch your email account to a different provider.
- If lunches with your attractive co-worker are causing adulterous thoughts, stop having lunch with him/her and/or invite others to go with you.
- If your drive home from work takes you by an adult video store that you frequent, change your route home to avoid going near the store.
- If your wallet is enabling you to visit massage parlors and/or prostitutes, leave it home or carry only a little cash (and no ATM or credit cards).

Change our viewing habits: This area may be painful for us to bring under control. Entertainment has become a pillar of our world culture. Doing without it may seem Spartan, but we must ask ourselves how much our purity is worth to us. The underlying question is, are we ready to bring our entertainment habits into submission to God? James 4:7 commands us to "submit to God" and to "resist the devil." If we fail to bring our entertainment habits into submission, this could be the stumbling block that keeps us in addiction. Before reading through our suggestions, we encourage you to ask God to convict you of the entertainment sources that need to be reduced or removed from your life.

These are merely suggestions – they won't influence your salvation with God, because your salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. These measures will help you close

potential doors of temptation. Though implementing such measures may not be easy, God will help you do them.

Television

Reduce or eliminate cable television options: It's a challenge to find wholesome programs on television. The abundance of cable channels seems to only increase the chances of falling to temptation. Many cable companies offer porn as well as movie channels that feature less explicit sexual depictions. I encourage people to reduce their cable service to exclude the movie and porn channels at a minimum. In our home, we cancelled our cable service and bought a basic TV antenna. The reception isn't that great, so we don't watch much TV as a result. At first we missed having all the things to watch, but later we found other things to do with our time. We've noticed that the lack of TV has helped keep our thoughts cleaner and has increased the peace in our home. When we do watch an occasional program, we find that our minds have been re-sensitized for purity. Program content and even the commercials often are promoting some worldly value that doesn't line up with following God. This further strengthens our resolve to continue to reduce our "TV intake."

Don't stay up late watching TV alone: Staying up late watching TV is asking for trouble. Late night TV offers some more risqué themes, along with the phone chat advertisements, Psychic hotlines and other solicitations. When we're tired, we have a tendency to let our spiritual guard down. We're more susceptible to getting in to trouble. For example, one of my accountability partners was falling to sexual temptation by watching HBO and Cinemax after his wife went to bed each night. He finally mustered the courage to explain to her that he was being tempted by the HBO and Cinemax. They agreed to reduced their cable service to exclude those channels. He also committed to not watching TV after she went to bed. The results were that he no longer fell to sexual temptation in that area and he started getting a better night's sleep.

Don't channel surf: I like the fishing analogy of trolling to illustrate the danger of channel surfing. Certain types of fish are best caught by driving your boat very slowly with the hooked bait trolling in the water. Channel surfing is like trolling in that we're moving slowly through the channels looking for something interesting. With the many channels out there, we're almost guaranteed to find something juicy to feed our eyes on. Even without cable television, I find flipping through the channels dangerous. Whether it's somebody shooting another person or two people having sex, or some other sin depiction, I'm better off going to the program guide instead of flipping through the channels.

Movies

The “adults only” lie: In [A Way of Escape](#), Dr. Neil Anderson pointed out that many people are buying into the adults only lie. It goes something like this: "I am old enough to handle the mature subject theme of what I am watching." Though we may understand the "mature theme" better than a younger person, our minds are still affected negatively. In fact, our understanding of what is going on may make the damage even deeper in our minds than in a child's. A friend of mine adopted a movie/TV policy for his family that I think is a good safeguard addressing the adults only lie. They agreed that if a program was not suitable for the kids, the parents wouldn't watch it either. I encourage you to adopt the same policy in your home.

My wife and I decided to stop seeing rated "R" movies several years ago. At first, it was difficult to give up the action-packed kind of movies I loved. I had to die to that hunger for violent entertainment. The pangs slowly subsided. As we went to see the "PG" rated movies, we noticed more and more objectionable elements in them as well. After seeing a few things that really bothered our consciences, we agreed to read a Christian movie review before going to see any movie. Armed with the truth about the things we wanted to see, we decided not to go to many of movies we read the reviews on. Even when we did go to the movies, the graphic previews of other movies gave us some bad feelings. We're at the point now that we hardly ever go to the movies. Some of the benefits are that we have saved some money, we have more time together as a family and our thoughts are less cluttered with worldly themes like violence and sex sin.

Consider shredding your movie card: While some people may not find it hard to stop going to the movies, I'm guessing that many people will have difficulty surrendering their movie rental cards to God. The movie rental stores are usually mirror images of the movie theaters with an added temptation: the video covers. After God brought me out of sex addiction, I began to notice how sexually explicit many of the video covers were in the rental store. It was like 7 out of 10 covers featured some type of sexual theme. Like channel surfing, walking around the movie rental store was trolling for trouble. I realized that this was a not a good place for me to be spending time looking around. The clincher was that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find wholesome movies to rent. Some places were courting the homosexual audience with "alternative lifestyle" rental sections and the porn audience with soft core porn themes. As a result, my wife and I decided to shred our "Blockbuster" rental card as a sacrifice to God and a step towards purity. It was a painful few weeks after we shredded our movie card. We found other things to do and now don't miss our Blockbuster days.

Read a Christian movie review before deciding to go: Christian movie reviews will help arm you with truth regarding the movie you want to see. As I mentioned above,

we found the reviews helpful in weeding out the bad movies. Focus on the Family's Unplugged site provides helpful Christian reviews of movies, television and music.

Computers

Get a filtered service provider: Whether you're free or addicted, filtered internet service makes good sense. There are increasingly easy ways to end up at porn sites on the net. A filtered provider removes many of these avenues to porn. There are several providers offering inexpensive filtered service ranging from free to \$19 per month. How much is your visual purity worth to you? If you sign up for one of these services, be sure to give your password to a friend, so you are not tempted to take a peek. See our [filters page](#) for suggested sources.

Set up PC Accountability: This is a great tool to help you stay off tempting websites. [Covenant Eyes](#) offers a monthly service where a list of every website you visit is emailed to your accountability partner automatically.

Other ideas:

- Ask a friend to check your computer files at random times each month
- Don't surf the net alone
- Keep the door open when you're surfing the net
- Keep the computer monitor viewable from doorway of your computer room
- Minimize open searches on search engines: Search engines are powerful tools for finding information, but can be dangerous for pulling up unwanted sites featuring porn and other sin themes. Find a Christian search engine if possible for the searches that you have to do.
- Stay away from personal ads and chat rooms

Magazines / Print material

Communicate with your spouse or roommate: Tell your spouse/roommate about any of their magazines that are causing you to fall to temptation. You may ask them to secure or discard the magazines so that you won't see them. Examples: women's glamour magazines, Victoria's Secret catalogues, clothing catalogues, porn, etc.

Reduce/eliminate hobby magazines with sexual overtones: Hobby magazines for men often feature sexy girls in the advertisements and subject articles. Sex sells, especially to men. How important is your hobby? Is it more important than your journey to freedom from sexual addiction?

The above measures may seem extreme, but I propose that we have to do some extreme things to reverse the effects of the extreme things we've viewed. It takes strength and

determination to resist the flow of our worldly culture and live as a "counter-culture" Christian. God will help us do this and realize the benefits of keeping our eyes in purity. One of the biggest benefits of keeping our eyes pure will be realized in our thoughts. We'll have less temptations for our minds to dwell on and fantasize about.

Personal Application Questions

- Please take an inventory of the things you're viewing that are sources of sexual temptation and other sinful depictions.
 - Next to each item, please write the reasons why you are viewing those sources.
 - Go to the Lord in prayer with your list. Ask the Lord for forgiveness for the sinful things you have allowed your eyes to see. Ask the Lord to strengthen your resolve to die to pleasures associated with each item on your list. Ask the Lord to begin the purification process of all the memories of the evil things you have seen. Ask the Lord to strengthen you to train your eyes to look away from temptation sources.
 - Please write down the actions you will take to eliminate or minimize your exposure to visual temptations.
-

Control Thoughts

Controlling our thoughts is perhaps the most difficult task of walking in freedom. Pornography is a powerful source of sinful images that our memory can easily recall. If you have been letting sexual fantasy run wild in your thoughts, you're probably wondering if its even possible to get control over the thoughts. What is impossible in our own strength **is possible** when we have the Holy Spirit helping us. Our responsibility is to work in partnership with the Holy Spirit to bring our thoughts into obedience to Jesus.

Brainwashing: Earlier in Freedom Journey we mentioned the problem of the memories that sex addiction causes. One of the challenges we face is to stop lusting over those memories. I have found it helpful to first ask God for help in washing the sinful memories out of my mind. A simple daily prayer to pray is:

"Father God, please wash my memory with the blood of Jesus and help me die to any sinful pleasure I have in it. Please forgive me for any sin I have committed in my thoughts. Thank you, Father. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

The basis for this prayer is found in [Hebrews 9:14](#) and [Hebrews 10:22](#). These verses state that Christ's blood cleanses our conscience from our sinful works so we can serve God. If I'm tempted to recall the memories each day, I then verbally apply the blood of

Jesus to the memory. I say something like, "[The blood of Jesus cleanses my mind from that memory.](#)" I often repeat this until the temptation subsides.

In addition to the problem of sinful memories, we have spiritual enemies ([Ephesians 6:12](#)) who are masters at tempting us in our thoughts (examples: Luke 4:5-6, Acts 5:3). These temptations cater to our minds' natural evil desires (Matthew 15:18-19). Satan's goal is to persuade us to engage our imaginations and lead us to sin.

The power of the imagination: Our imagination is a powerful gift from God. Imagination is a collection of focused thoughts that creates a reality in our mind. As we are made in God's likeness, our imagination is a scaled down version of God's imagination. God spoke the universe into existence from his imagination. Similarly, we can create things in our imaginations. For example, with one glimpse at a porn picture, I can imagine what it might be like to have sex with the person in the picture. Where the picture only gives me a visual impression, my imagination fills in the rest of the details: sounds, feelings, words, scenario, etc. Through such a fantasy, I commit sexual sin with the person in my mind (Matthew 5:28).

Satan has been baiting people's imaginations ever since the Garden of Eden. He enticed Eve to imagine having God-like knowledge. She wanted the knowledge, she liked the fruit's looks and she saw it was good for food. The combination of those factors motivated her to sin. Satan himself fell to sin by using his imagination to envision himself exalted like God. Satan said in his heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14 [NIV](#)). Satan was cast out of heaven as a result. Likewise, using our imaginations sinfully places an obstacle between us and God. Thankfully, we have the power to control our thoughts and honor God with them.

What to do when we're tempted

God gives us clear guidance on what to do with sinful thoughts. We are to take every thought captive and to cast down every sinful imagination ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)). Let's dig deeper to discover how to do this.

Take the thought captive: When evil thoughts come into our mind, we must recognize them, arrest them and command them to submit to Jesus Christ ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)). We have about 2-3 seconds to make the decision not to sin with the thought. After that point, we're much less likely to stop resisting the temptation.

The scripture tells us to restrain evil thoughts for good reason. When police officers arrest a criminal, they restrain him with handcuffs so that the criminal can not do more

harm. Likewise, we restrain evil thoughts so that they cannot cause more harm by getting our imagination and memories involved with a sinful fantasy.

How to take the thought captive: State audibly, if possible, "I take that thought captive to the obedience of Jesus and I bind that thought from corrupting my mind in any way, in Jesus' name." In addition, we can:

- Ask God to [help](#) us
- Bind any evil spirits that may be projecting the thoughts: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I bind any evil spirits that are projecting these thoughts, I loose the peace of Christ in my mind" (see [binding prayers](#)). Our authority to bind evil spirits comes from these scriptures: [Matthew 12:29](#); [Matthew 16:19](#); [Matthew 18:18](#); [Luke 10:19-20](#); [Mark 16:17-18](#); [Psalm 91:13](#); [Acts 16:18](#).
- Apply the [blood of Jesus](#): "I cover my mind and thoughts with the blood of Jesus. It cleanses and protects me."

Cast the sinful imagination down: After you take the evil thought captive, cast it down and send it away.

Reject it: The idea is to reject the thought as you would close your door on a person trying to rob your home. A simple rejection statement is, "In name of Jesus, I reject (or rebuke) that thought and imagination. I send you to Jesus right now."

State the truth: A powerful way to secure your rejection of the evil thought is to state the truth that destroys the lie. Every evil thought is based on a lie. Being familiar with the Bible will help us recognize lies, because we will know the truth. We can then apply Bible verses that destroy the lies by verbally or mentally proclaiming them. Jesus demonstrated this when he withstood Satan's temptations by speaking the applicable scriptures ([Luke 4](#)). Here are some sample scriptures for fighting sexual temptations:

- Matthew 5:28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." ([NKJV](#))
- Luke 11: 34 "Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness." ([NIV](#))
- 1 Corinthians 6:18 "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." ([NKJV](#))

- 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (KJV)
- Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things." (NKJV)
- Colossians 3:1-4 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (NKJV)
- For more verses, see [Bible verses on temptation](#)

Redirect thoughts: A final action to take is to redirect our thoughts to something pure ([Philippians 4:8](#); [Colossians 3:1-2](#)). We have to take action to get our minds out of the danger area. For example, when I am fighting a temptation, I will recite some Bible memory verses for several minutes until the temptation has subsided. Examples of additional things we can do:

- Pray
- Praise and worship God
- Play a praise and/or worship CD to create a God-focused atmosphere
- Change our location, and get out of the temptation area
- Call a friend and ask for prayer

We may have to repeat the above steps several times before the temptation subsides. It requires persistence and resolve to stop giving in to evil thoughts. When we repeatedly exercise our power to choose righteousness, our "spiritual muscles" will grow stronger, making it easier to resist the next temptations we face.

If you don't have a plan for memorizing Bible verses, please take a moment to devise a plan that will work for you. For example, the simple plan I use is to write down verses that I find when I do my quiet times. I write them on 3 X 5 index cards and then review the verses until I have them memorized. When I have about 12 verses memorized, I will start a new group of verses. The scripture memory work has helped me tremendously in resisting temptation. The more I memorize the more ammunition I have available to destroy the lies that come my way. Another option is the [Topical Memory System](#) offered by Navpress, which provides categorized scripture cards and a plan to memorize them.

Personal Application Questions

- What sexual memories are causing significant problems in your daily thought life?
 - What are two steps you can take each day to wash those memories from your mind?
 - What is the unique power of the blood of Jesus regarding our conscience? (hint: Hebrews 9:14)
 - In what ways have you been using your imagination for sin?
 - Within the first few seconds of a temptation, what actions should you take with the evil thought? (hint: 2 Corinthians 10:5)
 - What is the danger of not restraining or binding an evil thought?
 - What are three elements of casting down the evil thoughts/imaginings?
 - What spiritual warfare tactic did Jesus use against the devil during his temptation in [Luke 4:1-13](#)? How important do you think scripture memory is in using this tactic?
 - In what ways will you redirect your thoughts during the next temptation you face?
-

Practical Examples

This page covers some of the common temptation battles we're likely to face on the road to freedom. We can expect the devil to do everything he can to prevent us from walking to freedom. When we face these temptations, we can stand confidently in faith in Jesus Christ, who will help us be victorious.

Victory over temptation usually depends on our ability to bring our eyes and thoughts under control, as we discussed previously in this study. In the following examples, we will demonstrate ways to apply the eye and thought control principles. Hopefully you'll notice the recurring patterns. This isn't rocket science, but it does require us to tenaciously bring our flesh into obedience to Christ. It takes practice to exercise our spiritual will over our fleshly will, but as we do, we will get better and better at it. The battle will get easier to win if we continue to respond in obedience to Jesus.

Since men and women are sometimes tempted in different ways, we've divided the below examples by gender. Though perspective can sometimes differ, the same principles of taking the thoughts captive and casting down the sinful imaginations will apply.

Temptation Examples for Men

Computer example: The computer is a popular choice for viewing porn and soliciting sexual relationships. The secrecy and low cost make this medium particularly inviting. Since more and more of our lives are involved with the computer, we've got to be proficient at handling computer temptations.

Scenario: While surfing the net for ball bearing suppliers for his antique car, Steve notices several pornographic websites showing up on the search results. He's been down this road before, and he really wants to avoid the porn sites. For a few seconds, Steve considers his options. He knows that sick feeling in your gut that you get after you've been surfing for porn for hours. He's tired of failing and wants to live for Jesus for a change, but the thrill of seeing those sex pictures is powerful. It has an unexplainable pull on his mind. Things haven't been that great in the marriage bed for months and his wife seems out of touch with his sexual needs. What does he do?

Actions taken:

- Steve knows he's at a crisis point. He quickly cries out, "Please help me, Jesus." The verse he's been studying for memory during his quiet times comes to mind, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). "Lord, where is my way out?" he asks. "Help me find the way out."
- He closes his browser and steps back from the computer table. He knows the battle is far from over. Steve continues through his mental checklist of actions to take.
- "In the name of Jesus, I bind this temptation and take it captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). "The old Steve has been crucified with Christ, and the life I now live I live by faith in Jesus, who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).
- "I command these tempting thoughts to leave my mind right now, in Jesus' name. I am a son of God and I do what my Father has commanded me to do in his word. My body is an instrument for righteousness and I will use it to honor God by not sinning with my eyes and my thoughts" (Romans 6:13; 1 Corinthians 6:20).
- "I apply the blood of Jesus Christ to my thoughts. The blood of Jesus cleanses my conscience of these evil thoughts and purifies me from any hold they may have had in me."
- He puts in one of his favorite worship CD's and plays "Change My Heart, Oh God." While the music is playing, Steve redirects his thoughts to God's throne

room. "Father, forgive me for entertaining the porn temptation for a moment. Please strengthen me to pull completely away from this temptation. Lord, I pray for the healing of our marriage's intimacy. Show me how to be a better husband to my wife. Please restore the romance in our relationship." Steve then sings along with a few more worship songs.

Results: Steve succeeded in avoiding the easy click-through to trouble. As he resisted the intense pangs of temptation, he noticed that they grew weaker as he continued to resist. After singing the worship songs, Steve was back in the clear. He decided to shut down the computer for the evening and share with his wife about some of the things that he'd been frustrated about. This wasn't a guilt-trip designed to get sex from his wife, but an honest time of sharing his feelings and listening to his wife's responses. He also decided the next day to install a filtered internet service on his computer as a safeguard to help him avoid a repeat temptation.

Hotel example: For the traveling former porn addict, business stays in hotels can be a nightmare. More and more hotels are offering discreet porn options via cable TV. The combination of being separated from the family and the lure of illicit sex in the privacy of your room is often more than people can resist.

Scenario: Jim is a successful salesman who travels every month for a day or two. Jim dislikes having to go on the road, but the customer visits really help boost his sales. Jim's company only authorizes him to stay in the *Night Moves* hotel chain that happens to offer porn on its cable TV system. In the past, Jim has asked the front desk clerk to turn off the porn option to his room, only to call back later and have her sign him back up. Jim has recently made a new start in his walk with Jesus and is determined to have victory over temptation on sales trips. As he is driving to the hotel for his first night, the thoughts of watching porn start to surface in his mind.

Actions Taken:

- Jim realizes that his past failures have started with these kind of "preplanning" thoughts. He begins resisting the urge to imagine the pleasure of watching porn and masturbating. Instead, he says, "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke you Satan. I bind up these evil thoughts and I cast them out of my mind. The blood of Jesus covers my mind and purifies me." He puts in a worship cassette in the car and begins to sing along with it.
- At check-in, Jim asks the front desk clerk to block all porn options to his room. At his room, Jim prays over his room and his bed, asking God to fill the place with his holy angels. He commands any evil spirits that might be hanging around to leave the room. He also takes a little bottle of olive oil and anoints the room, the bed and the TV (see [anointing](#)).

- Instead of his usual routine of watching TV after dinner, Jim heads to the hotel gym for a workout. Later, after showering and preparing for the next day's presentations, he calls his wife. Since he had previously confessed his failure with hotel porn to his wife, she asks him if he has stayed pure. He is happy to tell her he is doing well. At the end of the call, Jim and his wife pray together and specifically target the sexual temptation area.
- Instead of turning on the TV after talking to his wife, Jim opens his Bible to read a chapter or so before going to bed. Finishing up his reading, Jim reaches to turn off the lamp on the nightstand. As he noticed the TV remote, battle #2 begins. "It wouldn't be that bad to just see what's on TV," a little voice says in his mind. He then remembers the several times in the past that he ended up masturbating after watching movies on the HBO channel.
- "I resist that temptation in Jesus' name," he says. "I take it captive to the obedience of Christ. I submit my eyes, ears and mind to God and I resist the devil. Now you must flee. Leave me now!"
- Jim decides to pray out loud for his family and tomorrow's appointments in order to get his mind off the TV temptation. As he prays, the evil thoughts continue to surface. Jim remembers that his accountability partner, Bill, asked him to call if he ran into any problems with temptation. "Thank you, Jesus, for helping me remember that," he says, as he dials Bill's number.
- Bill encourages Jim to resist the temptation and then prays with him.

Results: After praying with Bill, Jim finally finds peace and is able to go to sleep without falling to the temptations. The next morning, Jim wakes up refreshed from a particularly good night's rest. This helped him in his sales appointments later that day. When he returned home that evening, it was great to be able to tell his wife that he had succeeded in having a great trip with no falls into porn.

Church lady example: Since many of our readers are church-going Christians, I thought I should include an example from a church setting. Satan often targets us in church with temptation to distract our worship of God and study of the Bible.

Scenario: It's Sunday morning and Dave and his wife Sue are headed into church. As they are walking in, they greet Jenny, one of their good friends from their neighborhood fellowship. After a few minutes, Sue leaves Dave to take their daughter into the nursery. Jenny and Dave continue to talk. Dave had been attracted to Jenny in the past, and today she seems especially inviting. She asks him about his work and other things, and shows attentive interest as he answers. It isn't long before Dave starts to wonder what it would like to have sex with Jenny.

Actions taken:

- As a recovering sex addict, Dave recognizes the dangerous situation he is in. He realizes that he must stop his mind from continuing to fantasize about Jenny. While the conversation continues, Dave calls to God for help in his thoughts. "Dear God, please help me get these thoughts into obedience to you."
- Dave silently takes the fantasizing thoughts captive: "I take these evil thoughts captive in Jesus' name. I have the mind of Christ and I set my mind on heavenly things, not fleshly lusts." (Colossians 3:1-2)
- Dave looks for the next opportunity to tactfully end the conversation and go into church to join Sue. As he leaves Jenny, he resists the urge to give her a close hug. The thoughts about Jenny continue to try to regain center stage in his mind. Many things about her mannerisms today suggested that she was interested in him.
- As he joins Sue in the worship service, Dave continues to silently fight the evil thoughts: "In the name of Jesus, I bind these adulterous thoughts. I cast them down from my mind. The blood of Jesus covers my mind. It purifies me and renews me. Father, please forgive me for entertaining the adulterous thoughts."
- Dave then begins to run some of his memory verses through his mind: "Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7); "therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17); "if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13).

Results: Though Dave initially dwelled on the fantasy about Jenny, he pulled out of danger and arrested the recurring pangs of temptation until they subsided. By the end of the song time, he was clear of the temptation and was able to focus on the scripture lesson. Dave decided that from that point on, he would refrain from being alone with Jenny.

Bikini beach example: Current bathing suit trends make going to the beach a tough purity challenge for recovering sex addicts. This does not mean that we have to give up going to the beach, but it does require that we take action to control our eyes.

Scenario: Ted and his wife Lisa are invited by another couple to go to the beach for lunch. Ted has been free of sex addiction for a few years at this point, but still finds the beach "scenery" difficult. It seems like every time he goes to the beach, he is surrounded by women in bikinis.

Actions taken:

- On the drive over, Ted prays, "Father God, please help me to keep my eyes pure at the beach today. Please strengthen me to exercise godliness and to honor you with my eyes and thoughts."

- After meeting up with the other couple, they pick a spot on the beach that is several hundred feet from other people. As they set up the chairs, Ted positions his so that he is not directly facing tempting views.
- As they visit with each other, Ted notices a few ladies down the beach. Though they are fairly far away, he finds that his eyes are still drawn to them. The combination of the bright-colored bikinis and exposed skin attracts him like a fish to a lure. Ted begins to exercise control over his eyes. He has to consciously make the effort to focus on his friends, the sand, the water, the sky and other harmless views instead of looking at the women down the beach.
- At one point, a couple of young women come jogging down the beach. Ted removes his glasses as a safeguard to ensure that even if he looks their way, he won't see any details. He focuses on his conversation with his friend, Nick, as the girls pass by.

Results: Ted felt pretty good about his track record at the beach that day. He was delighted to hear that his actions helped him completely miss a temptation that his wife noticed. She told him that while he was talking to Nick, an attractive young woman walked up to look for shells on the beach right in front of them. She was bent over picking up shells for several minutes. Because Ted was keeping his eyes from wandering around, he didn't even see her!

Temptation Examples for Women

We'd like to thank author Elisabeth Freeman, from *A Time to Heal Ministries*, for writing the below examples.

Work place example: The workplace is an easy target for extramarital affairs. Since you are with your co-workers for eight to ten hours a day, you tend to share a common bond. And since working is a necessity to provide for our families, we must learn how to handle ourselves appropriately when temptations strike.

Scenario: While working on the production line at General Motors, Olivia notices how Steve is lifting her parts for her, so she doesn't have to bend down. He seems so caring and sensitive on the job and they have even talked when the line was down. With her marriage in a rut and her husband, Bob always away on business trips, she considers what it would be like to have an affair with Steve. However, she remembers how meaningless the last affair was and how it hurt everyone involved. But, Olivia is desperate for love and attention. Olivia's heart is pounding, her head is telling her to "go for it" while her heart is saying, "DON'T DO IT!" What does she do?

Actions taken:

- Olivia realizes she's weak, and begins to pray, "Lord, please don't let me fall into this trap again." Just then, she remembers the scripture, "I have come to set the captives free." (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8) "Lord, how can I break free?" she asks. "Show me the way."
- She excuses herself and walks to the ladies room. As she stares at herself in the mirror, she realizes that she's about to fall into the same pit. Then she remembers who she is in Christ, and that she's a new creature, and her old life is passed away and all things have become new. (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15)
- After thanking the Lord for strength, she returns to her job and explains that she won't be needing Steve's assistance any longer. She also shares that she will be taking her lunches with Jill from then on.

Chat room example: With internet and chat rooms being only a click away, women, as well as men, are often lured into seemingly innocent relationships. However, for someone who struggles with sexual addiction, this can be a major trap.

Scenario: Tara has an hour to kill before her husband gets home from work, the kids are down for the night, and she has a strong desire to log on to the internet. She's been chatting regularly with Lucky Guy, a guy she's never met, but she seems to have more fun talking to him than listening to her husband's boring work stories every night. A trace of guilt comes over her, as she turns the computer on. "What am I feeling guilty for? I'm not doing anything wrong. I'm just talking to a friend. It's not like I'm having an affair or anything." But the guilt doesn't leave. Her heart is throbbing, and adrenaline is rushing through her veins. She hasn't felt that way about her husband in years, but she feels this way about someone she has never seen. She wants to log on more than anything, but the scripture from earlier comes to mind, "Guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7). She knows that she should keep her heart and mind clear from anything that would lead her away from God, but at the same time, she sees Lucky Guy as just a friend to talk to. So, what does she do?

Actions Taken:

- Tara stares at the computer screen with her pulse racing anxiously. She hurriedly turns it off and says, "God help me as I try to make the right choice."
- After praying for a few minutes and reading the Bible in Ephesians chapter four, she fixes her hair, puts on fresh make-up, perfume, a nightgown, and surprises her husband when he comes through the door.

Dating example: Dating can play on anyone's emotions and be a real snare to the sex addict. The excitement and thrill in the beginning relationship are sometimes

misleading and alluring. Since dating is definitely a prerequisite to marriage, we need to be sure we can handle ourselves appropriately.

Scenario: After Jill had been dating Kyle for a few weeks, he began to pressure her for sex. Jill kept thinking what it would be like. The more she fantasized, the more excited she became. She reasoned that since Kyle said he loved her, it would be okay to have sex with him. However, as a new Christian, she kept remembering what she had heard in last week's sermon, "If a man even lusts after a woman, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). Jill's conscience is telling her to repent and back off from Kyle, but her heart is reasoning, "Well, if I'm already guilty, I might as well go all the way, right?" She's torn between what seems right and what feels right. What does she do?

Actions taken:

- Jill knows she's at her weakest moment. She quickly cries out, "Lord, forgive me, and help me to get out of this mess. I feel like I want to obey you, but I can't." She remembers the scripture passage she read earlier, "those things that I want to do I can't, and the things in which I don't want to do I do..." (Romans 7:19) She pleads earnestly, "Please, God, don't let me do those things that I'm not suppose to. Give me strength. Show me what to do."
- Wiping the tears from her eyes, she dials Kyle's number. When he answers, she explains that her life in Christ has to be first priority in her life and how the Bible speaks strongly against premarital sex and lust. Although Kyle doesn't understand, he agrees to wait and not pressure her.
- Jill also tells Kyle that from then on they should not be going on dates alone as it would be too tempting. God's Word is very clear that we are not to put ourselves in temptation's way.

Personal Application Questions:

- As you read through these examples, what were some of the recurring actions taken in response to the temptations?
- What temptation scenarios are recurring problems for you in your life? What actions can you take to change the outcome of those scenarios?

Course Wrap-up

I hope that you have found this course helpful. I encourage you to continue walking closely with Jesus. Many of the activities we discussed in *Freedom Journey I* will be useful to review periodically. Keep pressing in to the Lord, and don't fall back into

"spiritual laziness." Our enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour.

As an immediate follow-on to this course, I recommend *Freedom Journey 2*. It goes to the next level of recovery from addiction, healing and walking with Christ. See our [online course](#) page for more info.

If you would like to share constructive feedback with me concerning this study, please visit our [Contact Us](#) page. We encourage you to take our as the Lord leads you.

Appendix A

Why some people don't get free of sexual addictions

Not everyone who sets out to break sex addiction succeeds in getting free. In fact, we hear from people everyday who have "tried everything" to get free and haven't succeeded. With that in mind, here are some of the typical areas that hinder people from achieving complete freedom from sexual addiction:

1. **Unconfessed sin:** Any sin that we have not confessed to God and repented from could serve as a foothold for the enemy to continue to oppress us. Some strategic footholds include occult sin, unforgiveness, lust, idolatry, family sin, pride and murder. (see [Deal with Sin](#))
2. **Oppression from evil spirits:** Sex sin is a common door evil spirits (demons) can use to gain influence over us. Demons can block every step of our recovery efforts - even our confession and repentance from sin. It is possible for people to exercise their authority in Christ and dispel the evil spirits that are troubling them, but it may require help from other believers who will pray and stand in faith with the person ("Deliverance" ministry). We know from the Bible and personal experience, however, that evil spirits resist being cast out. Even the disciples had difficulty in casting some types of evil spirits out (Mark 9:18,28-29). See our [study on deliverance](#) for more info.
3. **Failure to develop a relationship with God:** This is usually reflected in the lack of a daily meeting time with God. The "quiet time" helps us to reload our mind with God's words from the Bible, to talk with God through prayer and to worship him (see [Meet with God](#)). As we walk out of addiction, we should shift our attention, resources and energies to pursuing God and doing his work. If we don't do this, the vacuum left by our addiction will certainly refill with trivial pursuits or a worse addiction. The typical excuse used is being too busy. If we

can't make time with God a priority, our efforts toward freedom will be powerless.

4. **Lack of faith:** Faith is a common ingredient in many of the healings that occurred in the scriptures. If we don't believe that we can be a new person in Christ with God's help, we won't. Unfortunately, some theologies can weaken our faith by suggesting that God doesn't heal and/or that God wants to punish us by sending evil on us. Jesus put it quite clearly, "**If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes**" (Mark 9:24 [NKJV](#)).
5. **Failure to [die to sin](#) and/or [crucify the flesh](#):** These must be done daily in our walk with God and typically involve exercising control over our [eyes](#) and [thoughts](#). Unfortunately, many people never learn how to practice and develop these skills, which are essential for survival in our pornographic culture. If we have been freed, yet fall back into our old habits, our condition will be worse than if we'd never been free ([2 Peter 2:20-22](#)).
6. **Emotional and spiritual wounds from past abuse/trauma:** The devil hates people regardless of age, but he especially loves to prey on children because the early years are strategic times for emotional and spiritual development. Sex abuse, physical abuse, divorce, accidents and traumatic entertainment (bad movies) can all be sources of wounds that we need healing from. If these wounds have never been dealt with in prayer, they are potentially serving as footholds for demonic oppression like sex addiction. When we invite God to cleanse and heal those past wounds, the footholds for oppression are removed. Healing prayer and Christian counseling are effective ways to work through these wounds (see [cut free](#) and [pray for healing](#)).
7. **Curses:** Curses can act like demonic oppression in that they can block our healing and development of a relationship with God. All curses can be broken in the name of Jesus Christ, but often they must be identified by name and specifically broken by the blood of Christ ([Galatians 3:10-14](#)). Family sin is a common source of curses, but there are many additional possible sources, including:
 - Possession of [occult](#) objects/books,
 - Participation in non-Christian religious ceremonies/rituals/celebrations
 - Visitation of pagan shrines/temples/altars
 - Involvement in witchcraft, sorcery, divination and other occult activities
 - People sending curses intending to harm or control (ex. Voodoo, witchcraft)
 - Words spoken over us (example: a father says "you'll never be good at anything" to his child)
 - Sin: Certain sins mentioned in the Bible are linked to curses: occult, sexual immorality, family disobedience, church disobedience, giving (lack of) and others.

****[Spiritual Warfare Ministries](#)** has an excellent section explaining curses and how to remove them.

8. **Failure to fight the battle with spiritual weapons:** The process of dismantling sex addiction strongholds is nothing short of spiritual warfare. People who rely on the Lord for the strength, authority and discernment to fight the battles will be successful. People who try to fight in their own strength and rely *solely* on help aids like accountability groups and filters will probably not succeed. Self-denial and help aids are good, but they are not to be our power source for freedom.
9. **Failure to internalize God's word:** I believe this may be the biggest reason people fail to get free. In the parable of the sower ([Luke 8:4-15](#)), Jesus explained the importance of properly hearing and applying God's word. He identified three ways the word can be hindered from taking root in our hearts:
 - The devil takes away the word from the heart, so that the person will not believe (12)
 - The person lacks "firm roots" - initially they hear and receive the word with joy, but fall away in times of temptation (13)
 - The person goes their way after hearing the word and it is choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures. As a result, the word bears no fruit to maturity in them.

Jesus explained that the people who would be fruitful in God's kingdom are those who hear the word with an honest and good heart, hold fast to it and bear fruit with perseverance (15). This is the heart condition we must have to achieve and maintain freedom from sexual addictions. The word is the foundation of truth that we need to dispel the [lies](#) packaged in the temptations we face.

Appendix B

Finding Peace with God

Our natural passions reflect a hunger and longing in us for connection and intimacy. The world offers us all kinds of "quick fixes" (like porn) that give us temporary pleasure and false intimacy. We can waste lots of energy and time pursuing things like sex, money and power, but we'll eventually realize that none of those things will fulfill the longing in our hearts. This is because only one thing will satisfy our desire for connection: God. God made each of us with a built-in need to connect with himself. When we decide to seek him, we'll start to discover true satisfaction and peace.

Our bad deeds in life have separated us from God. God is the source of love and life, and we can't afford to be separated from him. Thankfully he provided a way for us to be forgiven of our wrong choices, so that we can be reconciled to him. He provided the perfect payment through Jesus Christ for the wrong choices that we have made. Jesus surrendered his life as the payment that God required for our wrong choices ([sin](#)) to be forgiven.

For more in-depth explanations of what Jesus did and what he offers you now, please visit our "Peace with God" links at the bottom of this page.

God offers Jesus' payment as a free gift to each person who will:

1. Turn away from his wrong choices in life

AND

2. Accept Jesus' payment for his wrong choices

If you are ready to reconnect with God and leave your life of wrong choices behind, please speak these suggested words out loud to God right now and believe that God will hear you:

"Dear God, I recognize that I have made these wrong choices in my life _____ (list all you can think of). I turn from them now and ask for your forgiveness. I would like to be reconciled to you and I accept the sacrifice that Jesus made on my behalf. I invite you to fill me with your power so I may walk in victory over my addiction to _____ (fill in). Please teach me about Jesus and how I can live in fellowship with you. Thank you, God."

If you decided to speak those words to God, we would like to join you in asking God to do as you have requested. Please contact us and let us know of your decision (http://www.porn-free.org/Contact_us.htm).

Please know that God will help you! The Bible confirms this in Joel 2:32, "[Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.](#)" As you move forward, look for signs of God's help. God often uses a combination of ways to communicate with us, including thoughts, circumstances, nature, other persons, visions, dreams, the Bible and supernatural signs.

One of the great benefits of following Jesus is that you receive power to stop your old habits and live a new life. This power comes from God's Spirit who lives inside of you as a result of your belief in Jesus. He will guide you in making right choices, teach you about Jesus and show you how to live in victory over your former bad habits.

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Follow-up: If you spoke the above words to God, it is **vital** that you now pursue the new life that God calls you to. Here are some things you can do right away:

1) Get plugged in: We strongly recommend that you attend a Christian church in your area (see [church](#) page). Fellowship, encouragement and teaching will be an important part of developing your new life with Jesus.

2) Walk with God: Our Freedom Journey 1 course will help you walk with God in a “new life”. As you live your new life with God, you will find areas you'll need work on to bring them into obedience to God. God will help you through this process and will empower you to live a new life following Jesus.

If you have questions about the information presented on this page, you may find these links helpful for answers:

- [Steps to Peace with God \(Dr. Billy Graham\)](#)
- [Spiritual Answers from Needhim.org](#)
- [Steps to Peace with God \(CBN\)](#)

If you reject Jesus, you reject the only path of reconciliation with God available. Jesus bluntly said, "I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins" (John 8:24 [NIV](#)). If you die in your sins, you will spend eternity separated from God. God doesn't want anyone to be separated from himself. That's why he sent Jesus to pay the penalty for us!

Appendix C

Verses to Build Faith

These scriptures will help pump up your faith in God. A basketball without air doesn't bounce! In the same way, filling your life with faith in God will help you bounce back no matter what adversity you face on the road to freedom. The enemy will fight you, but he can not overcome faith in God! These are just a sample of the many verses in the Bible that can build your faith.

Matthew 7:7-8 [NIV](#)

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

2 Chronicles 7:14 [NIV](#)

if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Psalm 17:6 [NASB](#)

I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, hear my speech.

Psalm 18:6 [NASB](#)

In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, And my cry for help before Him came into His ears.

Psalm 145:18-19 [NKJV](#)

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.

2 Corinthians 1:9-11 [NKJV](#)

Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has **delivered us** from such a deadly peril, and **he will deliver us**. On him we have set our hope that **he will continue to deliver us**, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Psalm 119:9-11 [NKJV](#)

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

Isaiah 41:10 [NKJV](#)

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Revelation 3:20-21 [NKJV](#)

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Numbers 23:19 [NKJV](#)

God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

Psalm 103:2-5 [NKJV](#)

²Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: ³Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, ⁴Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, ⁵Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Isaiah 40:31 [NKJV](#)

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Psalm 91:14-15 [NKJV](#)

¹⁴"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. ¹⁵He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

Isaiah 53:5 [NKJV](#)

⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

Matthew 19:26 [NKJV](#)

But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Mark 9:23 [NKJV](#)

Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

Romans 4:18-21 [NIV](#)

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Appendix D

Finding a Good Church

It's difficult to walk the Christian life alone. The challenges of living for God in a sinful world can often overwhelm even the strongest believers. The scriptures tell us to team up with other believers to:

- **Worship** God together (Psalm 34:3)
- **Stir up and motivate** one another to love, do good works and to follow God (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- **Teach and admonish** one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16)
- **Encourage** one another to live in righteousness daily (Hebrews 3:12-14)
- **Be refreshed through fellowship** together (1 Corinthians 16:18)
- **Rebuke** in the fear of God and in love for each other
- **Mutally submit** to one another in humility (Ephesians 5:21).
- **Pray** for each other for healing (James 5:15-16)
- **Edify one another** through our spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-28)

Being "plugged in" to a church will help us meet the above objectives and foster our spiritual growth. It will help equip us for service in God's kingdom.

If you are not involved with a church, we encourage you to find one and get involved. If you are involved in a church that you don't like, ask God what to do. Sometimes God places us in situations we don't like so we'll make changes for His glory. In other cases, we may simply be in the wrong place and God is calling us to move.

What to look for in a church: There are many different kinds of churches. Before you start the church search, be sure to ask God to guide you in the search. Ask Him to show you the right place to go. Thoroughly check out a prospect church's doctrinal positions so that you are not deceived. There are many churches that worship a different god than God of the Bible. Some good things to look for include:

- Belief in Jesus Christ as the risen Son of God for salvation
- People reflect God's love
- Belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
- Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ (only)
- Training in Christian living (Bible studies, Sunday School, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Prayer Meetings, etc..)
- Belief in the current healing and delivering power of God

The belief in God's healing power will be important to the recovering sex addict. It encourages your faith for healing during the critical time of your recovery.

Trouble signs in a church's teachings: There are many possible deceptions that the enemy can use to lead a church astray. We have to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us and reveal hidden problems. Here are some examples:

- Salvation requires membership in the church or its denomination
- Salvation is not guaranteed through Jesus Christ
- The Old Testament does not apply today
- Homosexual lifestyle is acceptable for a Christian
- Sex is not sinful between unmarried people
- Healing is not a part of today's church ministry
- There is no absolute truth
- The Bible is outdated
- Worship or "excessive veneration" of saints (like Virgin Mary), historical figures or church leaders
- Legalism (salvation by keeping the letter of the law)
- Association with a non-Christian religion or a religion that deviates from sound Biblical doctrine, such as: Scientology, Christian Science, Unitarianism, Jehovah's Witness, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS/Mormonism), Mind Science, Metropolitan Church (gay/lesbian theology), Transcendental Meditation, Unification Church, etc...

Seek the best combination available and ask God what your part should be in that church. Don't settle for TV church, although it can make a good supplement to your spiritual walk. We all need face to face interaction and encouragement in the body of Christ.