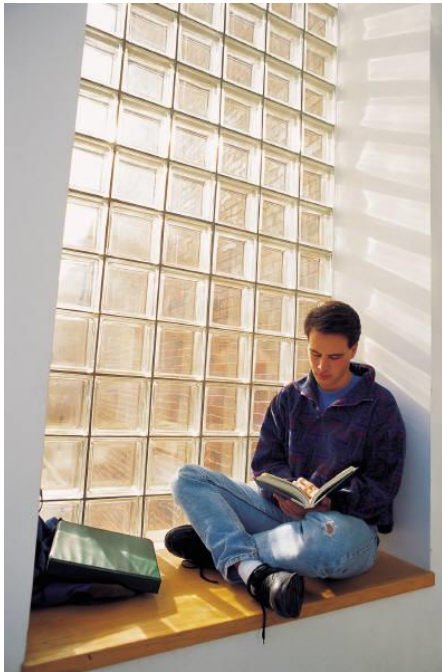


Delivered from Sexual Addiction

The author of this article has a friend of Reconciliation Ministries since 2003. His testimony tells of the devastation of sexual addiction and the power of Jesus Christ to deliver him from over 40 years of bondage. This story was originally published in the Reconciliation Ministries newsletter in 2005. The author continues to be a strong recovery leader.



I was introduced to pornography at the age of 8 or 9 by an older boy in the neighborhood. I still remember looking at those images for the first time and not understanding why I felt the way I did, but knew that it felt very good and I liked it. Over the next few years my Father's drinking became much more out of control and my family life became increasingly stressful. Pornography and masturbation became an escape from the harsh realities of life and I retreated there regularly. My Mom was forced to become both Mother and Father in our family. She became the family identity and source of strength. She was the one who played ball with us, attended the sporting events, provided emotional support and tried to teach my brothers and I how to be boys. My Father sobered up by the time I was 13, but he was still detached from the family and AA became his life.

As I progressed through my teen years my sexual issues seemed, to me, quite normal. As teenage boys do much was shared, bragged or lied about our sexual escapades. Yet, I guarded very closely that part of my life involving fantasy and masturbation not wanting anyone to discover the depth of it. I still wasn't aware there was a problem.

I met my wife when we were seniors in high school. Our relationship quickly became sexual which reinforced all the misconceptions I had about sex and women. Although the 60's were supposed to be a time of open sexual revolution, that aspect of our relationship was deeply hidden and vigorously lied about. As our relationship continued she became a "Goddess" to me and I felt I couldn't survive without her. We had few friends and for the most part our relationship was isolated and alone. Any sign of breakup became emotionally violent and always seemed to end up with us knowing we were "destined" to be together.

We were married in 1970. I was 20 years old and overnight went from being a son in my parents' home to a husband in my own. I had no idea who or what I was and as a result looked to my wife as the source of my strength and identity. I still had no concept of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the only true source of our strength and identity. **Although our sex life as husband and wife was good, lust and masturbation were beginning to play an even bigger role in my life as an easy way to react to stress and escape reality.** My wife and I devoted ourselves to creating an image that outwardly made us seem like an ideal family. Inside, however, the satisfaction level in our marriage was slipping fast. No issues were ever resolved. No expectations ever fully met. I decided changing jobs and moving would be the answer.

For the first time, I began trusting God with my life. We found a new church and became active. My relationship with God grew and the use of porn stopped. However, lust and masturbation were still there. Then I began to travel a lot and found myself pushing the line, always seeing how close I could get to sin and still convince myself I was living a Christian life. The use of pornography started again and any controls on my fantasy life quickly fell aside. As my marriage reached all time high stress levels, our first child came. Pressure on the job and on our finances grew. I was in a full-blown "mid-life crisis" and I withdrew deeper into my addiction. Any concept I had of my strength and identity was gone and I began searching for them in all the wrong places.

I met a woman with whom I became physically intimate. I thought it was great at first but was soon racked with guilt and convinced myself in order to do something like that I must be in love. By now I was

a married man with children and I couldn't leave them – I was much too “honorable” for that. Acting out sexually became easier and easier. I amazed myself at the barriers I crossed. I was in active search mode all the time. Through all of this I created an image of myself as a family oriented, Christian. I found myself praying week after week for God to take away the desire for sexual sin and deliver me from this mess only to find myself right back at it the next week. Nothing worked.

In Jeremiah 3:22 the Lord says, “My wayward children, come back to me and I will heal your wayward hearts”. Even through the full depths of my sexual addiction, Jesus was still trying to reach me. **After more than 30 years of marriage, on one of those days that divides your life before and after, my boss called me into his office.** I was asked if there was anything I wanted to say. I said I had been using the Internet a little and visiting some sites that I shouldn't have. It was a lot more than a little and a thick stack of documentation was placed in front of me. I was asked for my credit card, phone card, I.D. badge, and escorted to my car.

The drive home seemed to be in slow motion. I cried out to God as I tried to dream up some story to tell my wife. Not the truth Lord, I couldn't tell her that. Somehow, I made it home. I told my wife a short altered version of the truth and only about the pornography issue. It was all I was capable of. My wife agreed to support me through this, if I would get some help. Shortly before Thanksgiving, with all financial resources depleted, the Lord provided me with a new job with a Christian boss.

As we went through the holidays, things really began to build up in my wife. **In desperation I agreed to attend a program called Living Waters.** At the first session the leader told us “What brought you here isn't nearly as important as Who brought you here.” Each week I began to better understand this. For the first time in my life I confessed my sin in very specific detail. For the first time in my life I truly felt the love, grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. I knew deep in my heart that I was forgiven by God.

During this season the Lord said, “If you're ever going to trust me, now's the time”. **My wife told me to pack a bag and get out. I thought I would be gone for a couple of days and then I would come back home and God would begin to work things out. That didn't happen.** I found a place to stay and continued on in the Living Waters program. We tackled subjects like Acknowledging Our Need, The Father Wound, The Realignment of the Will, Welcoming Him Into Our Brokenness, Gender Insecurity, Broken Boundaries, Narcissism, Relational Idolatry and a host of others. As the weeks went on I began to understand why I was so predisposed to addiction yet I was finally able to take full responsibility for my past sin. Finally I knew what John 8:32 was talking about, “And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”. For me, the truth was that I was free to choose. I was free to say no to sex. Free to choose life rather than death. One night during praise and worship at Living Waters, I was feeling sorry for myself because of how bad things were and how I had lost everything. **The Lord spoke from deep in my spirit and said, “I took everything you ever put before Me”.** I knew it was true. He had taken my job, my wife, my children, my house, my church, my car – everything that had been more important to me than He was. I was stripped naked... standing before God completely broken, yet, for the first time in my life I realized I had everything.

As the weeks went by I could see God beginning the restoration process in my life. I learned God required the complete surrender of my will. I was to look to him to meet my physical, emotional, and financial needs. I needed to invite him into every area of my life – especially the dark ones.

As my recovery continues I am aware that it is a lifelong process. I spent many years seeking instant gratification. There is a lot of uncertainty in my future... legal problems, family problems, and problems I don't even know about yet. This living as “*A Being Healed One*” isn't always easy. Nevertheless, as I progress I know His grace is sufficient and stand firmly on 1 Peter 5:6-8, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”. I will be forever grateful to Reconciliation Ministries and the Living Waters program for showing me the way out of the darkness and into the light of Christ.

If you would like more information about Reconciliation Ministries, or any of the ministries we offer, visit us on the Web at www.recmin.org, or call (586) 739-5114. You may also e-mail us at info@recmin.org. All correspondence will be kept strictly confidential.

Reconciliation Ministries is a member ministry of **Restored Hope Network**, and uses many of the programs written by **Desert Stream Ministries**.

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