

Pornography — the 'secret sin'

By AL FAATZ

"God help me! I don't want to do this. I'm sorry, God. Please forgive me. I'll never do it again."

Over and over, the cycle of sin-confess, sin-confess repeated itself. **Where was this young associate pastor to go with his "secret" sin?** If he went to his senior pastor, he'd surely lose his job. If he told his wife, he'd probably lose his marriage and two beautiful children. **He was in his own private "hell."**

This secret sin grows from seeds planted in childhood. 98% of boys are exposed to pornography by age 9. (The biggest users of pornography are young men ages 12 to 17.) The disease grows worse, and if untreated, its victims will die. It has existed since the beginning of time, yet has been misnamed, mistreated, ignored and undiagnosed for centuries. Only recently has this secret sin been named and treatment offered to its victims.

Christians are not exempt. Experts say that 39% of Christian men may be sexually addicted. Promise Keepers surveys show as many as 60% regularly struggle with lust. According to a recent report, 43% of Christian married men use pornography regularly, 63% masturbate in secret and 61% fantasize about a sexual partner other than their own wife. A Christianity Today magazine survey showed that 37% of pastors regularly view pornography on the Internet. **Oh yes, the Internet!!!** Since the mid 1990's when the Internet soared in popularity, there has been exponential growth in the porn industry. 25 years of anti-porn work went down the drain overnight. Today porn is second only to software and computer purchases in Internet sales. It is estimated there are nearly 200,000 sites selling sex in some form. Internet porn usage is increasing about 150% every six months. Internet porn is truly the "CRACK COCAINE" of sexual addiction! 75% of Internet porn users are male and 80% are between the ages of 18 & 54. All you need is a computer, a modem and credit card!

Good Christian man, where are you spending your time and money? Is being **BORN AGAIN** and using **PORN AGAIN** working for you?

Some say that hard-core porn is damaging but there's no harm in viewing a Sports Illustrated calendar (soft-core). The truth is, pornography starts with a "seed." As the seed grows, you become hooked, and it eventually becomes a "cancer" that you cannot control. Here's



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how it grows:

1. We repeatedly return to the material for sexual excitement.
2. We escalate to more explicit material to achieve the same level of sexual stimulation.
3. We become desensitized, and in time this material becomes less acceptable and even less desirable.
4. We are no longer satisfied, with pictures. We need to act out the sexual activities with a live person.

What happened? When did we cross the line? Do we even know that we are addicted? Sexual addiction is progressive. The seed grows until it consumes us physically, emotionally and spiritually. Symptoms are isolation, lying, compulsive behaviors, lack of conscience, emotional numbness, fear and anger.

We need healing in three areas of our lives:

PHYSICAL - Because we're hooked on our own internal drugs of adrenaline, peptides and endorphins, recovery usually requires the help of a counselor who specializes in addictions.

EMOTIONAL - Emotional intimacy, the addict's greatest need, is also his greatest problem. Because he can't handle the rejection he fears from a real person, he opts for the beautiful woman in the magazine, who is always smiling, ready and willing. The pornography, fantasy and accompanying masturbation alters his mood and covers his pain. He feels good, but this is a "false intimacy." Recovery involves addressing the brokenness that led to the bondage.

SPIRITUAL - At the root of all addiction is the search to fill a spiritual void. We want to serve God, but the

shame of our secret sin keeps us from God's love and acceptance, and freedom from our bondage. God must be a major part of the healing process.

Christian brother! If we've been talking about you, here are six steps toward freedom:

1. **GET HONEST!** First, with yourself, then God. This means no more denial.
2. **CONFESS!** You will start healing once you tell at least one other person.
3. **FIND SUPPORT!** You cannot do this on your own. Find a recovery program that incorporates support, education and accountability.
4. **ALLOW TIME!** If you're serious, you will want to commit to at least one year. Your healing is not an event, it is a process. Your choices from this point forward will determine how long your process takes.
5. **INCLUDE YOUR MATE!** If you're married, your wife needs to be part of the process - not to do your work but to get the help and support she needs to heal.
6. **DO IT NOW!** Don't procrastinate! Still not sure if you're "hooked?" Call (503) 244-4350 with just your first name and address for a free "self-test."

There is hope ... help ... and healing! If the Church (the body of Christ) will become "Jesus with skin on" and unconditionally accept these wounded sojourners as Christ does, they can heal.

God created that young pastor mentioned earlier as a sexual being. God did not make a mistake, but Satan has created a counterfeit for every beautiful thing God has made. That young man believed Satan's lies and became hooked on pornography. **I was that young pastor.** I struggled as a schizophrenic Christian through 20 years of pastoral ministry, but God didn't give up on me. I'm here today as an example of God's grace and healing. God is ready to heal you, too. Are you ready?

Al Faatz and his wife, Pam, are co-directors of Dayspring Ministries, Inc., a Portland-based recovery ministry for adults struggling with current life issues and sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual woundedness. Dayspring works with individuals and couples through education, groups, and one-on-one counseling. A dual track for both the sexual addict and partner makes recovery and restoration available right here in the Portland area (reputedly #1 in per capita of hard-core porn outlets). Help is just a phone call away! Call or go to our web site for info.

503-244-4350

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www.dayspringrecovery.com