

Sexual Addiction

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Freedom from Compulsive Behavior

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Have you ever thought or said anything like this?

“I’ve tried to stop so many times, but I still end up in front of the computer surfing websites.”

“I want to be faithful to my spouse, but other sexual partners are so available. I know it’s wrong, but I just can’t seem to stop myself.”

“Accountability, prayer, avoiding situations, cold showers—I’ve tried everything, but I still fail. Is there any hope for me?”

“I know I need to get help, but I am too ashamed.”

“I thought only men struggled with pornography, but I spend way too much time in my erotic, romantic fantasy world.”

If some of these echo your thoughts and words, it’s likely that you are feeling trapped by an addiction to sexual fantasies and illicit sexual behavior. You feel guilty and ashamed, but you just can’t seem to stop. You try to keep your thoughts and behavior hidden, but you’re always

afraid that one day you will be found out. You know that your closest relationships are being affected by your struggle, but that doesn't help you to stop.

There is no magic wand to free you from your compulsive behavior. But there is a long-term relationship that will change you. When you ask Jesus for help, he will come to you mercifully and firmly. Jesus welcomes all kinds of strugglers into his kingdom. His Spirit will work with you. He will show mercy to you. He will change you.

Change happens as you face your behavior honestly *and* as you understand what motivates what you do *and* as you go to God to work true change in your life *and* as you find his mercy and help. True change that comes from God starts with your imagination and your desire life. That is where your struggle with compulsive sexual behavior begins. Do you believe God can do this? Take a step of faith. Read on. Ask God to begin to change you. Asking God for help isn't meant to be a big production. Just ask: "Help me. Teach me. Make me understand. Have mercy on me." Ask.

What is Sexual Addiction?

Sexual “addiction” is simply the latest way of describing behaviors that have been around since the beginning of human history. God intended sex to be an expression of marital love and intimacy between one man and one woman for their lifetime, but men and women have always overstepped those boundaries. Sex outside of marriage crosses the line and violates love. The modern world has made crossing God’s boundaries the norm. Sexual misbehavior is the new normal. Both men and women dress to attract attention and to elicit romantic or erotic feelings in others. Both sexes pursue eroticism. Few believe that sex should be saved for marriage. Soft-core pornography appears on broadcast television and in movies, magazines, billboards, and even posters at bus stops. Hard-core pornography is readily available on the Internet and cable television. Hooking up with a sexual partner—commitment optional—is considered normal. We are bombarded with erotic temptations every day; it’s the atmosphere we live in.

In this atmosphere, it's no wonder that illicit sexual behavior captures the lives of many people. Pornography, masturbation, sleeping together, affairs, sexting, phone sex, Internet sex—these are just a few of the resulting behaviors. Sexual addiction isn't just a male problem. Both sexes indulge in immoral sexual activity.

Do you struggle with guilt and failure? Or do you not struggle because you've simply accepted immorality as normal? If you are starting to struggle, you should be encouraged. Knowing you are wrong and looking for help are actually the first steps to becoming a different kind of person.

Sexual Addiction Starts Inside You

Your struggle with sexual addiction doesn't start with your behavior. It begins with what you want, what you live for. So addressing your struggle must start with what is going on inside your mind. In James's letter, God explains how we get trapped in wrong behavior: