

## Self-Study Courses through Niceville Assembly of God

Distance learning and self-study are among the most dynamic and fastest-growing educational strategies in colleges and churches across America. Though different from traditional classroom study methodology, the goal is the same: to guide students through a systematic approach to spiritual formation.

This course has been carefully written and prepared so that you may experience intellectual and personal growth in the convenience of your home and at your own pace. Do not expect home study to be an easy shortcut to learning; it requires high motivation and self-discipline, since there are no prearranged class times. If you follow the process faithfully, however, your investment of valuable time will pay rich dividends in increased understanding and spiritual growth!

To assist students in grasping the concepts presented in self-study courses, a qualified Course Advisor is available to answer any questions you may have and to help guide you through the materials. Simply e-mail your questions or comments about course content to [dguthmuller@nicevilleag.com](mailto:dguthmuller@nicevilleag.com). Your question(s) will receive prompt attention by your Course Advisor!

### Suggestions for Studying

You cannot study the Bible as though it were just another book. Those who wrote it were inspired by the Holy Spirit, so you need the Holy Spirit to illuminate its truth to your heart and mind. With an open Bible, the Holy Spirit, a textbook, and a study guide, you're in the classroom of the Holy Spirit. As a student of the Holy Spirit, you'll achieve the goal of this course--anointed learning. Here are some study tips:

1. Set aside quiet and regular times for your study. Concentration is easier if you turn your mind to your studies at the same time each day.
2. Pray as you begin each study session. Ask the Lord to help you understand the material and make appropriate application to your life.
3. Look over the lesson objectives and the questions at the back of this workbook prior to reading each section.
4. Read through the lesson. Look up scripture references and take any notes that may be helpful. You may want to highlight pages or take notes in the margins as specific points make an impression on you.
5. Close the book and try to think through the main points. Think about what you've learned and seek ways to apply it in your personal life, in discussion with family and friends, in a Bible lesson, etc.
6. Answer the study questions in the back of the workbook. To get the most out of this study, be sure to use the manual properly. Don't simply turn to the section designated and search only for the answer, leaving the rest of the valuable material unread.
7. Take your time. No bell will ring to force you to move on to new material.
8. Make good use of reference tools, such as a study Bible, a comprehensive concordance, and a Bible dictionary. An up-to-date English dictionary will help you understand words that may be unfamiliar.
9. If you have access to the internet, you may want to use online resources such as <http://www.biblegateway.com/>, <http://www.bible.org/>, <http://www.e-sword.net/>.
10. Email any questions you may have concerning this course and its contents to [dguthmuller@nicevilleag.com](mailto:dguthmuller@nicevilleag.com). Please indicate which course you are taking and the specific page number(s) which is/are in question.
11. When you have completed all study questions, you may check your answers against the answer key in the back of the workbook. Don't "cheat"! Remember, the only person you will be cheating is yourself!

## Personal Goals and Progress

### Learning Goal

From this course I hope to be able to:

### Study Goal

I plan to schedule the following time(s) for study:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

Saturday:

Sunday:

Hours per Week:

### Progress

Date Course Started:

Date Course Completed:

## Personal Commitment

I hereby submit myself to the Holy Spirit and commit myself to becoming the person God created me to be.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Breaking Out of Sexual Addiction

## Course Syllabus



### Description

Sexual addiction is the worst addition facing Church leaders today. That is because most Christians deal with sexual addiction and pornography at the sin level rather than treating the root cause. Regardless of how much confession and promising to stop; this addiction does not go away as long as we treat the symptom and not the root cause. Getting married does not solve the problem because sexual addiction is *not about sex!* It is about legitimate, unmet needs being manifested through illegitimate means. Those afflicted with sexual addiction are the walking wounded people with an inner brokenness of which they themselves are not aware of. Come; join the writer as he walks you through the world of those who are lonely to the core. He walks you through the doorway of healing for those brave enough to step out by faith and try proven methods to get free. Someone you know may be weighed down with this burden and this study is a tool for helping them to break free of this bondage.

### Objectives

Course objectives are three-fold. First, the study is designed to show why people afflicted with sexual addiction have found little encouragement in the “quick fix” mentality of the Christian community of our day. Second, it provides insight into the root cause of sexual addiction, along with practical step-by step help for those who are struggling with sexual issues. Third, it has help for spouses of sexually adducted men.

# Breaking Out of Sexual Addiction

(Niceville Assembly of God, Niceville, Florida)



(Boyce A. Teas)

## Preface

(Except otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible. You are permitted and encouraged to make copies of this study provided you do not sell or altar copies.)

## Introduction

The Lord Jesus came to release the oppressed and help the broken hearted (Luke 4:18-19). The sexually addicted individual is no exception. Although a woman can become sexually addicted, for the most part, men are more apt to be afflicted. There are believers in Christ from every walk of life who desire to live moral lives but have sexual issues. These are construction workers, administrators, laborers, electricians, salesmen, police officers, and even pastors. What makes people who love God indulge in sexual sin? This study answers this question, along with a step by step help for those afflicted. It also offers advice for wives whose husbands are struggling with sexual issues. Although a woman can become sexual addicted, for the most part, men are more apt to be afflicted. Except otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from the NIV.

## Section I – Definition

Let me say up front, not everyone who struggles with a sexual problem is dealing with an addiction. Read Matthew 5:28. What the Lord did not say was if you notice an attractive person of the opposite sex you've committed adultery. Some lust is caused by testosterone and men are attracted to a woman through his eyes more than any other way. That does not mean people are not responsible for controlling it, however. Picture a person who has been driving around town and been too busy to stop to eat. Its past lunchtime and he is approaching a fast-food restaurant and his senses are overwhelmed by the smell of burgers and fries. At this point, he may turn in and fill his body with the wrong kind of greasy food, or drive past and wait until he gets home to eat a healthy meal. While he has no control of what happens inside of his body at that moment, what he can control is how he responds to how he feels. To feel shame and guilt over an initial attraction makes as much sense as condemning yourself for feeling hungry when it's time to eat. It's how you handle the initial attraction and what you do with the internal pull decides the morality of your choice. The Old King James Version presents Matthew 5:28 this way: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." It's the second look with intentions of mental pursuit which constitutes adultery or fornication.

Sexual addiction is an *obsessive-compulsive relationship with a person, object or experience for the purpose of sexual gratification*. The sex addict may be attracted to an object, such as a woman's undergarment, etc. The object itself brings a feeling of security and acceptance—a real person isn't needed. Strange as it may sound, a man

can be attached to his wife in a way that is unhealthy. As a result of this, the addict does not bring his true self into the sexual act. He would rather engage in the predictable ritual of sex than uncover his true self. This is a hurting person who is using objects, pornography, and others to meet a non-sexual need. It is basically a trap set by Satan. Read Ephesians 4:17-19. This passage is a perfect description of the downward spiral of a sex addict. The problem begins with the person's faulty core beliefs, thinking he can handle pornography, "R" and "X" rated movies, etc. Next, he begins to act out sexually in an unhealthy way thinking he can stop at any given time. This "futility of thinking" clouds his judgment and knocks out his sensitivity to sin and ability to discern right and wrong ("darkened understanding").

There are nine common steps leading to sexual addiction:

**Step 1:** The triggering mechanism, which is usually visual. Just about anything that has a sexual connotation can set the person off (E.g., photo of a woman on a billboard, woman in a magazine, the way a woman dress, the perfume she wears, the way she walks; the way she talks, the way she worship in church, the sound of a woman's voice, etc.). Being ignored, insulted or rejected can even be a triggering mechanism. The addict has trained himself to run to something or someone sexual when he has any negative emotion. That's because the visual/emotional stimulation triggers a painful awareness of unmet nurturing needs. Though it is based on a legitimate need, it expresses itself as lust.

**Step 2:** Repressing his painful emotions and replaces them with something sexual. As children, the sex addict was taught that certain emotions were "bad" (E.g., anger, fear, etc.). As an adult, he represses his unacceptable and painful emotions and replaces them with thoughts of sex.

**Step 3:** Fantasizing and planning. After the addict represses his pain with thoughts of sex, he moves into actively fantasizing about sex. He cherishes every detail of the fantasy journey. For some, it may last for several hours, as he goes from a stressful environment to his couch or bed where his fantasy is played out. For another, this phase may last for weeks or even months. The addict may meet a woman and become obsessed with her. He would fantasize about her often and plan ways to win her over. Every word, gesture or smile becomes the execution of a subconscious plan of entrapment.

**Step 4:** Moving toward the object of his fantasies. For the individual who is addicted to pornography it would be when he started the car and started down the street to purchase a magazine or movie. He knew he was going to do this. It was only a question of which store and which magazine or movie. As the hunt progresses, neurotransmitters are released in the brain as adrenaline is released into the bloodstream. The person actually becomes intoxicated, non-chemically, but emotionally. The closer the man gets to the right cable channel, magazine or woman on the corner, the more intense the intoxication becomes.

**Step 5:** The Connection. The connection occurs when contact is made with a real person or a symbol that leads to the fulfillment of the addict's fantasy. E.g., the addict dials the phone sex number and connects with a woman's voice; opens the magazine and "connects" with the centerfold; is told by the woman in the nightclub she will go home with him. At this point the sexual and emotional release is only moments away.

**Step 6:** The actual act itself. Nothing matters now but the climax (orgasm). This is not the loving, passionate love-making that is experienced in a healthy marriage. This is a release of the pent-up sexual energy that has masked the emotional pain underneath.

**Step 7:** is the Chemical Payoff. If everything has gone according to his fantasy, at the moment of climax, the addict feels overwhelming pleasure. He has reached the chemical payoff.

**Step 8:** The Letdown. Immediately following orgasm, the individual feels wounded, not bonded. A sexually addicted husband may feel the same way after having sex with his wife. The let down is the lowest point of the cycle. It is here that the addict will do one of two things: get help or fall back into denial. For most, getting help is not an option for two reasons. First, if he seeks help he will be required to stop. In spite of his misery and complaining, that is something he isn't ready to do. Second, to seek help is to admit that something is wrong. The shame of that admission is more than his fragile ego can bear.

**Step 9:** Vow and denial. Typically, a sex addict will offer a prayer of "repentance," make apology to God, promise God and himself he will never do it again, only to turn around and repeat the sinful act. In a biblical perspective, he has not repented at all! See Proverbs 11:14; 28:14; James 5:12, 14; See Matthew 5:33-37. The addict can literally identify with Paul's words in Romans 7:19, "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing." Although the person longs to be set free and has repeatedly tried to stop, he is terrified of life without the addiction. As the addict continues to make vows that are impossible to keep, pastors and conscience becomes desensitized or indifferent to his sinful condition. The person then begins to avoid closeness with God, separating himself from the life of God. He may go to church or even be a pastor, but he is only going through the motions of being saved as he has already cut the flow of the Spirit off to his inner self.

## **Section II - Signs of Sexual Addiction**

**Obsession with sex:** While all men can be sexually compulsive from time to time, for the person afflicted with sex addiction, just about everything he sees contains sexual innuendo. That is because sex has become the foundation from which many of his unconscious decisions, plans, motives, thoughts and actions are made.

**Age-inappropriate behavior:** The apostle Paul said, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me" (1 Corinthians 13:11). While not all inappropriate childish behavior is caused by sexual addiction, it can be one of the indicators. For example, like a six-year-old, a thirty-year-old man may justify himself by saying, "That's the way I am." Yet everyone around him can see how childish his behavior really is. When this is pointed out to the sex addict, he becomes defensive and thinks everyone is against him. His only concern is his own needs. He is not able to think about the needs of others. If he is married, his dealings with his wife are characterized by insensitivity. He may insist on sex at any given moment and ignore his wife's feelings and needs altogether. His TV, newspaper, hobbies, etc. always come first over his wife and children. When he does attempt to spend "quality time" with them, it is usually brief and superficial, unless it involves an activity of his liking. Yet, he can be giving, complimentary, pleasant and positive towards everyone outside of his immediate family. Others may think of him as "Mr. Personality." But this can be an unconscious attempt to manipulate and control others to get them to meet his hunger for approval. The sex addict is a needy little boy in an adult body!

**Intense reaction in response to minimal stress:** The sex addict will explode, withdraw or become manipulative when he does not get his way. One area where this is clearly seen is in the sexual relationship with his wife. If his wife declines his advances, he may react negatively by sleeping on the couch, leave, etc. as a demonstration of his passive rage. If he is the more aggressive type, he may yell, claiming she never meets his needs. This guilt-inducing tactic is usually effective for a few years until his wife catches on to what he is doing. As childish as all of this may seem, his feelings of rejection are profoundly real. While his wife is not actually rejecting him; he perceives it that way! His sense of rejection is followed by feelings of hopelessness and despair that can last for days. He feels that since his wife said no to sex, she was, in fact, rejecting him. This reaction betrays a deep level of childish need he mistakenly thinks a loving wife or a sexual fix can cure. It will never happen. What passes for love in some Christian marriages is actually a very needy, dependent, and dysfunctional way of using the relationship to meet needs a spouse was never intended to meet.

**Display childish coping mechanisms:** The sex addict may be an excessive talker; avoider or use blame in an effort to throw people off and cover up his feelings of insecurity. He will talk excessively to control the conversation in order to keep people from getting close to him. If he is an avoider, he uses one of the most powerful weapons there is, silence. While the avoider can have his congenial side, when the conversation gets too personal, he simply shuts down. When the conversation involves his behavior, motives or whereabouts, he displays a hurt look and silently walks out of the room. He learned in childhood that this tactic is an effective way of keeping people out. The blamer avoids taking personal responsibility by attacking those who catch him in a lie or sexual indiscretion. He accuses them of being critical, suspicious or self-righteous. Since there is usually some truth to his accusations, he effectively silences most of his critics. Mark Twain once said, "A man is never truly a failure until he blames

others for his mistakes.” The blamer is trying to avoid others because he holds to the belief all sex addicts have, “I am basically a bad and worthless person.” As the result, he cannot endure any constructive criticism. To him, constructive criticism confirms his sense of worthlessness. If he could see his great worth to God and others, in spite of his real shortcomings, he would be able to see his faults and begin to correct them.

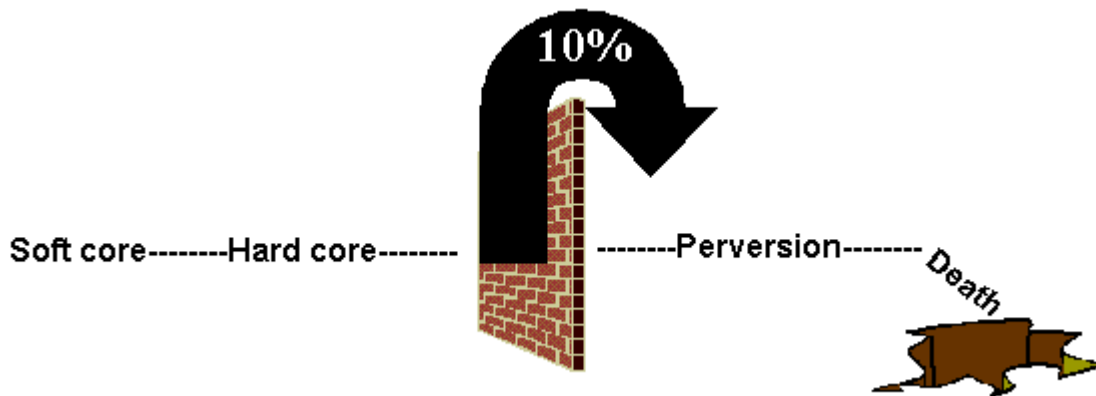
**Inner suffering of loneliness:** The individual who has had his or her basic need for love and acceptance met has a hard time understanding the inner pain of loneliness the sexual addict lives with every day. Deep down he longs for love and acceptance but consistently deflects the affection expressed by others, which becomes the reason for his loneliness. The sex addict believes he is unlovable and not worth of love. It becomes a self-fulfilled prophecy when people give up trying to reach out to him. The addict fills the void of love and acceptance with some kind of sexual act. While some addicts relate to others in a way that doesn't risk their inner self, others choose not to relate to people at all. They find it easier to relate to a thing (a magazine, piece of clothing, or fetish). In time, the pornographic fantasy becomes more satisfying than real relationships which can involve demands, challenges and possibilities for rejection.

Signs of sexual addiction due to the inner suffering of loneliness include eating disorder; workaholic; spendthrift; substance abuse; obesity; high blood pressure; pain in joints; high level of anxiety; panic attacks; severe mood swings; depression; fatigue all the time; sleeping disorders; extreme irritability; and a host of other physical and emotional problems. As strange as it may seem, becoming wrapped up in a religious activity (mistakenly called "ministry") can be a sign of sexual addict due to inner suffering. Some think because a person is involved in worship, prayer or Bible study they are relating deeply to God. But genuine intimacy with God involves being stripped of our attachments and false securities; to stand totally exposed (naked) and before the Lord. This, the addict will not tolerate! The sex addict may say Jesus is the most important person in his life when the chips are down, when he needs power for ministry, when the children are sick, when the fragile base of his self-esteem is in danger, etc., he ends up falling into sexually addictive behavior that leaves God totally out of the picture. He is constantly in a state of stress due to his inner conflict and double mindedness (James 1:7).

**Masturbation:** Most Christian leaders label masturbation sin. Unfortunately, many wrongly interpret Scripture in an effort to prove their point. For example, they use Onan in Genesis 38:8-10 to condemn masturbation. This wasn't a case of masturbation but a case of rebellion against God's law. Out of spite, Onan withdrew during intercourse just before ejaculation. God saw his selfish, stubborn heart and judged him accordingly. Another reference that is wrongly cited against masturbation is Leviticus 15:16-18. Masturbation is not even mentioned. The text implies the climax occurred during either sexual intercourse or a nocturnal emission ("wet dream"). God's concern was of a sanitary nature, not a moral one. It isn't immoral of a man to have sex with his wife! People of that time had inadequate health codes which resulted in the routine spread of disease and infection. God was giving them regulations concerning bodily functions (see also Leviticus 15:8, 19-31; Deuteronomy 23:12-14).

While there is no clear biblical prohibition to masturbation, it definitely violates biblical principles. First, it usually involves fantasizing. Matthew 5:28 exhorts a person not to fantasize about having sex with anyone who isn't his or her spouse. Second, masturbation is a mismanagement of emotions. When the sexual addict is bored, lonely or angry, he masturbates. This is no different from what the alcoholic does when he experiences some type of stress, except the alcoholic chooses a six-pack rather than an orgasm. Instead of working through the emotions and understanding what they mean, the sex addict short-circuits the whole process by masturbating. Third, it keeps the door to the addiction open. For those who justify masturbation by saying, "At least I'm not fornicating or cheating on my wife," the practice waters and fertilizes the roots of sexual addiction in their mind. Fourth, it violates biblical sexuality. When the Bible speaks of sexuality in a positive light, it always refers to a shared experience between a man and his wife. The only alternative to monogamy is celibacy, not masturbation (Matthew 19:4-6, 10-12). The single person must learn to redirect his or her sexual energy into worship and service. The married sexual addict has a similar task by channeling his sexual energy toward his wife and toward the Lord.

**Addiction to pornography:** Almost all sexually addictive men have an addiction to pornography. While a good man can have a weak moment and look at a pornographic magazine or video, the frequency of their use determines whether an addiction is present. Those who engage in pornography fulfill the words of Paul in Romans 1:23, 25. They are taking their deep hunger for love to a sexual goddess rather than to God Himself. While it is natural to want sex or to be charmed by a woman's body, pornography enables the addict to skip all the demands a mature relationship involves and relate to the fantasy woman in the magazine, video or computer. The overwhelming compulsion of pornography is a sure signal this is about more than sex. Those who are addicted to pornography before marriage usually carry it over into the marriage. Many who are under the *grip* of the demon of pornography got their start on the Internet. *Penthouse* and *Playboy websites* receives over *54 million* hits per month. Most of these hits come from young people. While they would never look at dirty pictures in a magazine, they are looking at them on the Internet late at night while their family is asleep or when Mom and Dad are not at home. What a tragic picture! Young people for whom Christ died to set free are eaten alive by their sexual lust. According to Dr. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, pornography is a progressive addiction. The following graphic depicts the progression of pornography addiction:



**Soft-core pornography** is legal and readily available in stores. It can be any sex-oriented material such as magazines (i.e., Playboy, Penthouse and Playgirl), airbrush nudity, movies, romantic novels, etc. Soft-core pornography is the first step and the doorway into a destructive lifestyle of sexual addiction.

**Hard-core pornography**, step two, is explicit images of everything that a man and woman can do together sexually. Teenagers are the number one buyers of both soft and hard-core pornography. Exposure often begins at age 12 or 13. This exposure distorts the person's view of how women feel about sex and what can reasonably be expected from the sexual relationship and sets the individual up for disappointment in the real world. Real women cannot possibly measure up to the airbrushed, color-enhanced, glossy photographs that become the standard of reference for most males.

**Perversion**, step three, is sexual images outside of what normal men and women would do. E.g., sex and violence, sex with animals, homosexuality, homosexual violence, and anything imaginable. Prostitution, voyeurism (looking through people's windows), exhibitionism, rape, child molestation, etc. are just some of the illegal ways sex addicts try to get their longing for love met. This is where child pornography comes in to play. The human mind is never satisfied. It becomes bored and needs more and more. Pornography was a billion-dollar industry in this country when it was outlawed in 1983. How does someone develop a great excitement for four, five or six year old children? It started when he stepped onto that progressive path and jumped the barrier of what normal men and women do. While not everyone who is addicted to pornography goes this far, there is a percentage that do. The problem is no one knows if they are in that percentage when they start out on the path of pornography.

**Death** can be the final outcome of this progressive trail, as it is for all progressive addictions. Non-substance addictions are as powerful as their chemical counterparts, drugs and alcohol. While drugs and alcohol lead to death, pornography leads to death of innocence, death of integrity, death of character, death of relationships, death of one's soul (Romans 6:23), and even physical death.

### **Section III - Hindrances to Recovery**

**Fear of exposure.** For example, "If you really knew me you wouldn't love me." Interactions within the family during early childhood taught him it was not safe to reveal his real self. His external demeanor, achievement or rebellion only covers up the raging loneliness within. He lives a double life: the man he presents to others and the man he is when no one is looking. He not only expects rejection from others, he expects it from God. So he continues to lie about this part of himself by not bringing it into the open.

**The belief the addicted one is the only person who can take care of his needs.** If you know someone who is not talking honestly about his sexual sins, lives as though he has it all together, and takes his unmet needs to compulsive sexual behavior, you are looking at someone who falsely believes he is the only person who can take care of his

needs. While many say they believe in Jesus, believe the Bible and love others, their lifestyle says something totally different. James points out that “our true beliefs are demonstrated not by our claims but by our actions” (James 2:14, 17-18). Though the addict’s relationship with God may be real enough, it does not go far enough. Down deep he believes he is the only person who can take care of his own needs.

**Feeling of hopelessness:** Many sexually addicted individuals believe they are beyond help. While no one lets go of idolatrous attachments easily, this is especially true for the sexually addicted person. Hopelessness is not only a response to traumatic losses; it can also become a habit-forming coping mechanism. Hopelessness leads to passivity that prevents the individual from stepping out of his comfort zone and trusts God and others with his problem. Passivity is the feeling that says, “Oh, well, I can’t do anything about it. Nothing ever changes anyway.” This is one of the root causes that give rise to sexual addiction. Feelings of hopelessness is a carryover from childhood where his attempts to please his parents and win their affection were often futile. In response, he developed a passive orientation to life and withdrew into a self-protective shell of passivity where no one can hurt him. There is always a consequence for passivity, however. Scripture has ample examples. Abraham paid dearly for passively submitting to Sarah’s agenda and fathered a child out of wedlock (Genesis 16:1-2). Eli suffered for his passivity as well. While he spoke to his sons, Hophni and Phinehas about their immoral lives, he didn’t actively restrain them. God judged him severely for his passivity (1 Samuel 3:13) and for seeking his sons’ approval over the approval of God (1 Samuel 2:29). As outstanding as David was, he refused to take action when Amnon (one of his sons) raped his half-sister, Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-21). After Absalom (another one of David’s sons) took matters into his own hands and killed his sister’s rapist, David still refused to deal with the situation or work through the issues with Absalom (2 Samuel 14:23-24). David’s continued passivity so exasperated Absalom he eventually rebelled against his father and started a civil war that resulted in the deaths of twenty thousand men (1 Samuel 15:1-18:7; 2 Samuel 14:28-33). The pacifist takes false comfort in the fact he is not involved in “overt sin,” never realizing passivity is a form of rebellion against God

Many sex addicts are real go-getters in business, ministry or sports but allow passivity to take over when it comes to dealing with their deep rooted emotional or spiritual problems. Listen to a conversation between a counselor and a sex-addicted man:  
Counselor: “Jim, you say that Jesus is your Lord, yet every time the going gets tough, you turn to pornography.” Jim: “I know what you’re saying is true. But—I’m going to be honest with you, I’m not sure I can do this.” Counselor: “What do you mean?” Jim: “I mean, I’ve tried to pray and read the Bible when I was lonely. It didn’t help.” Counselor: “Is that what I’m telling you—‘pray and read’?” Jim: “Well, aren’t you?” Counselor: “No. Mechanical Christianity won’t help you. I’m talking about a relationship with God that invites Him into the pain. But that can’t happen if you use sex to mask the pain every time it comes to the top.” Jim: “What’s God going to do for me when I’m hurting that bad?” Counselor: “For one thing, He’s not going to wave a magic wand over you. You don’t know it yet, but you are actually in a good place. Others can go on with their lives without confronting their brokenness, but you don’t have that luxury. Because of

the pain you're in and what you've used to manage it your life is starting to come unraveled. It's a good news/bad news proposition. The bad news is because of what you're dealing with you won't be able to play church as a lot of people do. You won't make it if you do that. The good news is courage is available in Jesus Christ to let God and others into this area of your heart so you can heal. Once that happens you will experience an intimacy with God the average Christian knows nothing about. But until you courageously face your problem, bring God and others into the picture you will continue to be bound. "

#### **Section IV – Recovery and Deliverance**

The sex addict has attempted to stop numerous times without success. He enjoys acting out sexually and, at the same time, has a bitter hatred of it. Some are able to stop for years, but the longings eventually resurface and the behavior resumes. One youth pastor said, "I pleaded and prayed to God hundreds of times but with little long-term effect. The question I kept coming back to was, 'How can this be? I am a Christian, I love my wife, I have two special children and I am a minister—what is wrong with me?'" What is wrong is he is longing for something that is non-sexual. That is why saying "I am sorry" to God and promising to stop is not enough to overcome this addiction. External ritual, masturbation, pornography and adultery, fornication and other relationships are only used by the sexual addicted person to keep the pain at bay. None of those things satisfy the longing soul. Recovery involves ten steps.

**Step 1: Examine your childhood and parenting.** While sexual addiction can be the result of such things as sexual abuse when the person was a child, for the most part, sexual addiction is a developmental issue. That is why it is absolutely essential during their developmental years for children to be nurtured. It creates feelings of abandonment that eventually lead to rage if the need for nurturing is not met during the first eight years of life. The behavior usually begins to manifest in pre-adolescence. Although adults need nurturing it's not on the same level of fulfillment as when the person was a child. Sexual addiction is basically a longing for love and acceptance the individual never received from his childhood. That is why those afflicted with sexual addiction must courageously and honestly explore the dynamics of his upbringing during his formative years (first eight years of life). Otherwise, formative trauma will be hidden deep within the soul. The false self-concepts experienced as a child will remain intact until they are effectively dealt with. If the sex addicted person doesn't take an honest look at how those deficits were created in the distant past, he is doomed to continue seeking false solutions in the present. What the addict is not aware of is he is trying to meet subconscious needs through sinful behavior. This is why neither psychology nor preaching can help him. While psychology focuses on the individual's pain, it does not believe in the existence of sin. Preaching focuses only on the sin. That is why neither approach is helpful. In fact, both independent approaches are damaging. One reason Christians are so stumped by this problem is they take a one-sided view of what is driving the addiction. They see it primarily as a moral and sin issue. While it is that, immorality alone does not uncover the driving force behind the sinful acts. Healing and deliverance is not possible until the sexually addicted person

discovers the true motive behind his actions and how it is being carried out internally through false beliefs deep within the subconscious mind. One's true motive can only be discovered by examining early childhood.

I know it's hard to think your parents were anything but perfect, but all parents make mistakes (Ephesians 6:4). To believe your parents were perfect is a denial of original sin. Many Christian parents are great in the admonition (training and discipline) department but fall short in the nurturing department. There may have been times, as a child, when the sexually addicted person needed affection, but was told by a parent, "Quit holding on to me!" When he wanted attention, he heard, "What do you want now...Can't you see I'm busy?" When he wanted understanding he may have heard, "What's wrong with you? Are you stupid?" Some Christian parents add a religious touch to their negative messages, E.g., "Don't you know Jesus doesn't like it when you are sad/mad/bad?" E.g., "I know Daddy and Mommy aren't home very much but we have so much to do at church." Translation: "Church ministry is more important than I am!" Nurturing is not about teaching children to memorize Bible verses and going to church. It is a matter of affirming children and speaking words of life to their sense of self the way God does to us through the Holy Spirit.

There are two common threads which run through almost all sexually addicted people: lack of adequate nurturing and a lack of love and acceptance during early childhood. Nurturing brings about attachment. Love and acceptance bring about bonding, security and a healthy sense of self. Verbal put-downs, name-calling, yelling, screaming or distancing on the part of the parent may have caused the child to retreat inwardly and thereby cut himself off from the little nurturing that was available. With an adequate supply of affection, unconditional love and acceptance, the child will likely develop a healthy sense of self and grow into a healthy adult. Without love and acceptance an individual will be emotionally and socially retarded. A study done by Dr. H. M. Skeels proves this. She took thirteen children from an orphanage and placed them in a woman's facility to be cared for by some of the inmates and staff. The children were rocked, cuddled and lovingly spoken to; things the overcrowded orphanage could not provide. In a two-and-a-half-year period the children's IQs increased an average of 29 points. The IQs of the children in the original institution *dropped* 26 points during the same period. Both groups were tracked for the next thirty years. Those who were nurtured and accepted went on to integrate normally into society. Those in the original institution were never released due to mental retardation and lack of social functioning skills (although one got a job as a dishwasher). (Taken from *Breaking Free, Understanding Sexual Addiction and the Healing Power of Jesus*, by Russell Willingham, 1999, Intervarsity Press) If we as children we not nurtured and did not experience unconditional love and acceptance we have a hole in our soul. What is missing is affirmation and acceptance. Affirmation makes a person feel good about self. Acceptance causes a person to feel loved.

People will wear funky clothes, put earrings in all kinds of places and do strange things to their hair in order to be accepted. They will also step over all kinds of moral lines if there is a possibility acceptance waits on the other side. Take Nathan for example, he

had an abusive alcoholic father who would literally throw him against the wall for such “major” infractions as interrupting his dad when he was talking to someone. Nathan never got close to his father because he was too busy walking on eggshells around him and trying to stay on his good side. Nathan felt cut off from his masculinity because there was no real bonding between he and his father. Although he did the things he thought would “make him a man” (football, baseball, sex with girls, etc.), he never did feel complete. There was something missing - his father’s love and acceptance. He became an alcoholic and began frequenting prostitutes. He stopped for a while after becoming a Christian only to start back up again. He was using alcohol to cope and women to prove his masculinity, all because he never experienced love and affirmation as a child.

A young man by the name of Luke struggled with voyeurism and pornography. He would spend endless hours looking through windows or looking at dirty pictures in magazines. Not only did Luke profess to be a Christian, his parents were missionaries and he was married. After six months of marriage, his new wife insisted he get help. While they were not alcoholics or child abusers, they failed to give him the love and acceptance he needed, especially his mother. As a young boy, Luke would wrap himself around his Mom’s leg and ask for kisses. Being uncomfortable with his “hanging” on her all the time, she would push him away. This made Luke believe something was wrong with him for wanting to be close to his Mom. One day when Luke was about nine years old, he came home early from school and saw his Mom sunbathing on the back porch. Like many of the women in that part of Mexico at the time, she did her sunbathing in the nude. Luke immediately averted his eyes. When he realized his mother had not seen him he hid behind a chair and stared at her nude body. His heart was pounding and he had an erection. His mind swam with both shame and euphoria. When his mother sat up, he quickly recovered and ran to his room. He couldn’t get the image of his Mom’s nude body image out of his mind. In the months ahead, he found himself wanting to see her again. He even sneaked into her bedroom and made tiny cuts in some of her blouses, hoping she would inadvertently expose herself when she wore them. Though it is not uncommon for a boy to be struck by the accidental sighting of his mother’s body, Luke was affected very deeply. The combination of his need for affection (“mother hunger”) and the nudity that seemed to satisfy it became a snare. The seeds of sexual addiction had been sown deep within his subconscious mind. Obviously, choice was involved for both Nathan and Luke. Although, as children, they were accountable for the things they did and the sins they committed, they were not responsible for the vacuum that has been created by unmet developmental needs. The hunger for parental love and acceptance set them up to meet their need in sinful ways. Proverbs 27:2 says, “To the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.”

Family interaction can affect us negatively in many ways. Here are two of them. First, if the child doesn’t have the needed nurturing relationship with his parents he may feel insecure, detached and abandonment. The search for security is a search for attachment. The sex addict fears attachment because it has often led to abandonment. He resolves his dilemma in his mind by forming an unhealthy attachment to sex rather than a healthy attachment to a person. Though he experiences a “high” when he

substitutes something for real attachment, his God-given hunger for security goes unfulfilled. He is trying to get something from the wrong places and through the wrong things. Second, negative family interaction can cause a child to grow up in shame: The issue of shame is one of the most misunderstood and overlooked aspects of Christian growth. I have yet to meet a sexually addicted person who doesn't struggle with shame. There are three kinds of shame: Consequential shame, fallen shame and abandoning shame. *Consequential shame* is the natural consequence of sinning against himself and God. It is the voice of conscience that was felt every time he acted out. This type of shame will disappear when the addiction disappears. *Fallen shame* is a good thing if properly understood. We inherited this from Adam in the Garden of Eden. This shame should immediately disappear when we believe in the Lord Jesus and become accepted through God's grace (Romans 5:1; 8:1-2; 15:7; 1 John 3:19-20). Because of how others have treated us, *Abandoning shame* is the experience, whether conscious or not, of feeling worthless at a core level. In adulthood, the shame-orientated person may be insecure and passive. Or, he may project an aura of self-confidence to hide the fear of the insecurity which lurks below. Everything is about him. He is frozen in the developmental stage of childhood that seeks the approval, notice and admiration of those around him. If his wife politely turns down his sexual advances he interprets them as rejection of him as a person. This type of shame is the most difficult to deal with since many of us don't even know it is there. A major give-away is he abuses himself, and perhaps others, through sex. The sex addict is still trapped in the egocentric worldview that he had as a child. Thus, recovery and healing for the sex addict starts with discovering the driving force behind the obsession. Until the sexually addicted person discovers his behavior is being driven by unmet emotional needs from his childhood and finds out what they are, no prayer, technique, principle or book will bring total recovery.

**Step 2: Change false beliefs about inner self.** Proverbs 18:21, "The tongue has the power of life and death." In this case, it does! Even if your parents conveyed you were "good for nothing" or "couldn't do anything right," you are now an adult and don't have to accept it as fact. This kind of emotional abuse doesn't make us worthless. We choose to feel worthless. The apostle Paul said, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me" (1 Corinthians 13:11). The addict cannot use the past tense as Paul did because he is still stuck in childish beliefs, perceptions and notions that protecting his ego and preventing him from taking responsibility for his choices. Paul calls your wrong thinking about yourself "strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). He also says a transformation can take place in the mind that makes it possible for these strongholds to be demolished (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Until the sex addict changes the way he sees himself he will remain a prisoner of his own mind. Cross-reference Romans 12:2.

Most sexually addicted people feel they are a bad and unworthy person. Satan's most effective weapon against this individual is his identity and value as a person. If Satan can get the hurting person believe he is worthless and unacceptable to God, he can continue controlling him through the addiction. Using the mistake parents make, Satan attacks the person's identity. The devil even attacked the identity of the Lord Jesus

(Matthew 4:1-4). We shouldn't be surprised. Satan knows if he can get us to see ourselves as hopeless and worthless sinners we will sin. He used this tactic against Eve and Adam in the Garden (Genesis 3:4-5). In effect, he said, "God doesn't care about you. He's only protecting his own interest, knowing you will reach your full potential if you partake of this fruit. Unlike God, I see the value in you and want you to enjoy life to the fullest. Go ahead and take a bite!" The devil was able to convince Adam and Eve that God didn't have their best interest at heart and he had a clearer picture of their worth than God did. You might think it was ludicrous for Eve to fall for this, but sex addicts do it all the time. They believe their girlfriend; a centerfold; the act of masturbation, etc. will make them feel more valuable than God is capable of making them feel.

Don't misunderstand me. I am not saying God doesn't want us to confess up and feel bad about our sin. Honest conviction of sin is a must. Where we go wrong is by believing our sin make us worthless. Those who are in legalism will be tortured by their sense of worthlessness even when they haven't done anything wrong. This is the epitome of abandoning shame. And it is non-biblical! Though Scripture talks about our sinfulness and unworthiness to inherit eternal life that is not what this belief is referring to. Feeling worthless moves the sex addict toward a sorrow that approaches despair, the opposite of the healthy shame (godly sorrow) Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 7:10. Ben was seeing prostitutes and visiting massage parlors weekly. Pornography and masturbation were his daily bread. Take Ben for example. He constantly lived with unbelievable guilt. He felt guilty when he was acting out; he felt guilty when he wasn't acting out. Ben's father was an authoritarian pastor who drilled into him that God wanted him to be good. Ben was convinced obedience was the condition of God's love and acceptance. Since he didn't measure up to all of God's "standards," he felt hopeless and defeated. He used addictive behavior for comfort and a way for coping with his feelings of worthlessness. He had this little voice in his head that told him, "You're no good...You're no good!" He assumed it was the voice of God. After all, it was so strong and continuous. With the help of a counselor, Ben discovered this was the deep-seated voice of his dad expressing itself through his own condemning heart (1 John 3:19-20).

While you may not always act like you are a member of the royal family, if you have made Jesus your Lord and Savior, you are a child of God nevertheless (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1). Many believers in Christ are often clueless about who they are because they are wrongly attempting to find their value and significance through serving. You will never find your value through serving or doing something. That is giving to get, not giving because you already have. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you already have God's love, acceptance and approval. Isaiah 44:2, "I am your Creator. You were in my care even before you were born" (CEV). 1 John 3:1, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called of God!" You are of great worth to God, created to be loved by God. Ephesians 1:4, "Long before He laid down the earth's foundation, He had us in His mind and settled on us as the focus of His love to be made whole and holy by His love" (MSG). 1John 4:16, and so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in Him". God wanted to create someone who was capable of experiencing His

love and loving Him back (1 John 4:19). So He created you. He didn't need you, He wanted you. He wasn't lonely - He made you in order to love you. Before we can talk about anything else, you have to understand this is what on earth you're here for – to be loved by God and to love Him back. Because you are supremely loved, your contribution to the body of Christ is as great as anyone else's. You are also capable of the same sin as anyone else. You are neither greater than everyone; nor, are you a dirt bag in comparison to others. You are a saint (Ephesians 1:1), chosen and appointed by God to bear spiritual fruit (John 15:16). Believing you are less than that makes you vulnerable to attacks from Satan through your emotions. The sex addict uses sex as an anesthetic to deal with his sense of worthlessness. The only remedy for this is for him to believe that God sees value in him. Choosing not to believe this is playing along with Satan's attacks on his identify and worth. Cooperate, instead, with the Holy Spirit, and you will see a major plank in the platform of sexual addiction pulled out!

Luke 9:23-25, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?" Based on this passage, many of us have been told not to love ourselves but to deny ourselves. There is no question we are to deny self and obey Jesus. But this passage does not say the self is inherently bad and must therefore be discarded. If that's what it means, we have a problem, because the Lord also said, "What good is it for a man to...forfeit his very self?" Jesus says that our "very self" has more value than the whole world, and we are not, under any circumstances, to relinquish that part of us. Some of you may be confused at this point. Do we deny and hate the self or do we cherish and protect it? Obviously, there are two selves. One is bent on meeting its need in its own sinful way (this is very relevant to those with addictions). This self must be denied and overcome. We are not to give in to its whimpering and pleading. To do so is to come up empty and, in the end, forfeit our lives. The other self, the new self born of God's Spirit (John 3:3), however, is of great value. We are not to trade it in for anything! That is the self that Jesus died for and to which He wants to give eternal life to. Tragically, it is this self which we wrongly hate in the name of self-denial and often shamed by broken parents. What the Lord is saying is this: "That part of you made in my image is of great value and worth. Cherish it, nurture it and bring it into line with the new nature I've put in it. But that part of you that is fallen - kill it without mercy."

**Step 3: Identify those parts of the woman's body you are obsessed and what it means.** This is the combination that allows you to unlock the prison door of sexual addiction. All sex addicts have an affixation with parts of the woman's body. Behind this obvious erotic desire is a deeper desire and legitimate need. Find out what that need is and transfer that over to God and you will unlock the door to your addiction. Healing will not take place until you do this. That is because the male fixation on certain parts of the female body usually represents a profound desire for nurture and affection that were not met in childhood. Simply put, the individual is trying to get an emotional need fulfilled through parts of the female anatomy. The affixation won't go away until

the individual understands what is going on internally and adequately address that need and transfer it over to Father God where it can be met. Let's examine the different parts of the woman's body and see what they mean to those afflicted with sexual addiction.

**Breasts:** For most sex addicts, a woman's breast symbolizes nurturing, closeness, warmth and security; all of which an abusive, non-affectionate and domineering mother never gave. Take Jim for example. He would come home from work and masturbate to pornography. He was able to get rid of pornography and stop masturbating after becoming a Christian, but was unable to get rid of his lust and obsessive thoughts when he saw an attractive woman. Thankful, he went to a counselor who understood sex addiction. The counselor asked Jim to be specific about his thoughts when he saw an attractive woman. "Well, I guess you could say I'm a 'breast man.'" "You mean, when you see a woman's breasts it triggers certain thoughts?" asked the counselor. "Yeah, I seem to be obsessed with them." While it is natural to notice women's breasts, especially the way women dress and the emphasis placed on them in our society today, it is abnormal to be obsessed with them. In Jim's case, he had years of addictive conditioning working against him. The counselor asked him to be more specific about *what this part* of the woman's body symbolized? "Do you mean like breast-feeding and that sort of thing?" asked Jim. The counselor said, "More than that. What is the *emotional* need a woman's breast meets?" Jim's said, "I suppose it would be nurturing." Jim was on target and now understood why he was so obsessed with women's breasts. Breasts symbolizes nurture, closeness, warmth and security; all of which his abusive and non-affectionate mother never gave him. The reason his obsession with the woman's breasts did not go away when he stopped pornography and masturbating was because Jim had not adequately addressed what he was trying to get from looking at women's breasts, which was Mom's affection, closeness and warmth.

**Buttocks:** Some men dwell on the women's buttocks. Nathan was one of them. He used to cruise for prostitutes after dropping his daughter off at his former wife's house. He had stopped acting out in an inappropriately way sexually, but was still troubled by recurring thoughts. His counselor informed him he would not be able to stop until he understood what that particular part of a woman's body meant to him. After some encouragement to not be embarrassed and to be totally honest, Nathan admitted his ideal fantasy was he enjoyed touching a woman's buttocks. Then he would turn her over, look at her vagina, and then have intercourse. When the counselor asked him what emotional need this fulfills, he said, "Well, I guess I feel accepted!" He was right on target. To Nathan, the buttocks are connected to the vagina, and, the vagina symbolized acceptance. It was acceptance, not sex, which Nathan was longing for!

**Non-sexual parts of the woman's body:** The issue is the same when the person is obsessed with parts of a woman's body that are not sexual. E.g., arms, legs, face. The arms and bare shoulders are linked to the breasts; the legs to the vagina. Even the face captures some unmet need within some addicts. Eyes and the mouth have the ability to relate to something deep within the soul of some. A woman's eyes can signal interest or disinterest, hunger or contempt. The mouth can make the individual feel accepting and affectionate, etc. If you are having obsessive thoughts over a particular

part of a woman's body, ask yourself what it is that particular part means to you. The way to discover that is to ask yourself what you want to do with that part of the body. The answer to that question will tell you what the childhood need is that you are trying to get fulfilled through the fixation.

**Step 4: Re-parenting - transference:** Discovering and admitting what body part, sexual act or romantic situation you crave, is crucial for healing; but it is not enough. It only tells you what you are longing for that you didn't get from parenting. This specific longing in you must be transferred over to God. In order to do that you must first explore the origins and content of your perceptions of God. Faulty thinking and responses must be corrected if you hope to develop trust and experience re-parenting. God wants to be the object of your longing. Obviously the Lord cannot meet our orgasmic need, but He can meet the need behind it, which is obscured by addictive thinking and habit.

Many have a problem with transference because they view God the way they do their parents. Take Jim for example. He felt rejected after he had an argument with his roommate and went into depression. He prayed but nothing seemed to work. He felt God didn't even care. He picked up the phone and dialed the number of his accountability partner, but he wasn't home. With seemingly nowhere else to turn, Jim gave in. His four months of sexual sobriety came to a disappointing end. Afterwards, loaded down with guilt and condemnation, he went to his counselor and told him, "I just felt hopeless when my roommate said those things." His feeling of hopelessness was actually a feeling of worthlessness. The counselor took a tablet and drew a line down the middle. At the top of the left-hand column he wrote "Dad." At the top of the right hand column he wrote, "God." He turned to Jim and asked him to describe his father. "Well, I felt I couldn't please him. His standards were too high," responded Jim. The counselor wrote "perfectionist" on the left side. Jim also said his father was distant. The counselor wrote "distant" on Dad's side of the tablet. "Most of all," said Jim, "I was a disappointment to him." The counselor wrote "disappointment" under Dad's column. "Now describe God to me. I don't want your Sunday school answers but what you really feel He is like," said the counselor. Jim gave an almost identical list for God as he did for his Dad! That is not unusual for people with sexual addiction.

If you are one of those who have not learned to totally trust God, understand something. The real God of the Bible is unlike anyone you've ever known. David described Him this way: "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger; abounding in love...He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him" (Psalms 103:8, 10-11). The sexually addicted person may say God is loving, kind and forgiving, but when the chips are down, he has a hard time believing it. That is because his beliefs about God are not based on the clear teachings of the Bible but on own previous experiences with his parents and others.

Take an honest look at the deficits of your past, give up the need for them, and transfer these needs over to a loving heavenly Father who can give them to you. Not to do that is to continue seeking false solutions in the present. Also, stop looking for unconditional

love, affection and nurturing from your parents, even if they live nearby. Your parents can't give you something they don't have in them to give. If they had it in them to give you would have received it when you were a child. God not only has it in Him to give, He has already accepted you as you are (Romans 15:7). Let God tell you daily, "Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life" (Isaiah 43:4). He has already demonstrated His love by sending His only Son Jesus to die for you on a cross so you can be with Him throughout eternity. He not only loves you and accepts you as His adopted son (John 1:12), He can nurture you in a way your parents did not. The longing for human approval and acceptance will disappear once the transference over to God has occurred. You will start feeling good about yourself based on the nurturing relationship you have with your loving heavenly Father and not based on how others see you.

There are those believe the above steps are not necessary for overcoming sexual addiction. They believe all a person needs is to be free is to confess, ask God for deliverance and use self-discipline. If that is all there is to deliverance, then why are people still bound who have all done this? Why wouldn't you employ every means possible to be delivered? Why wouldn't you want to try something that has been proven? Until you learn to embrace what's in your heart and transfer that need over to God, you will never have a permanent change. The apostle Paul understood the power of "setting your affection on things above and not on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). God is more concerned over where we place our focus than whether we squeeze out the right emotions (Isaiah 55:7).

There is a woman in John 4 who attempted to address the pain in her heart through marriage. After five tries, she gave up on the institution of marriage and just moved in with guy number six. Then, one day she met Jesus at a well when she went to get water. Did Jesus advise her to go to a sex therapist, read books on communication, etc? No. He said to this hurting woman, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water" (John 4:10). Jesus was telling her to make the transference from sex to Him. There are those who believe in Jesus, but have replaced him with adult masturbation, sex with different partners, sex with the same gender, pornography, adult TV channels, and pages of *Hustler*, *Playboy* or *Playgirl*, etc. They are trying to bypass an intimate relationship with Christ and accomplish the same thing. It's called substitute transference. It won't work. Then, there are those, who when tempted by another woman, try to transfer their thoughts over to their spouse. It won't work either. One man said, "If all of this is true about redirecting our longings to God, what's the point of marriage?" He assumed, like many others, married sex would fulfill this need. It can to a point, but no woman can fulfill all of a man's longings or sexual desires, especially if he is a sex addict. Marriage does not solve the problem. Many times marriage will only cause confusion because, as already stated, sexual addiction is not about sex.

**Step 5: Repent.** Repentance is both a process. The typical sex addict will make an apology to God and promise he will never do it again, only to repeat it before next Sunday. In a biblical perspective, he has not repented at all, because he is still dealing with the addiction his way. See Proverbs 11:14; 28:14; James 5:12, 14; Matthew 5:33-37. Repentance is a process of changing one's thinking, thus changing directions. Repentance is first and foremost admitting you have a brokenness which cannot be resolved by mere confession of sin. The two most common failed approaches people with sexual addiction take are (1) "I don't have a problem; it's normal to look at other women (denial) and (2) "I will fill my mind with something else and look the other way approach." Neither approach works! The "I don't have a problem" guy is just kidding himself. The "look the other way" and "I will fill my mind with something else approach" is an improvement over the denial approach, but it's still not the answer. It doesn't meet the relational need that the heart is crying out for. There is a difference between legitimate pain and one's sinful way of dealing with it. There is a difference between emotional deprivation and the long-standing pattern of sin that obscures it; knowing where one ends and the other begins is one of the keys to understanding the problem.

If you are someone who is struggling with sexual addiction you must be willing to openly admit you have a problem, repent and bring others into the struggle and submit to their counsel. The mistake the addict makes is to believe that his sincere vow to God changes everything, while his subconscious agenda stays the same. As long as a person refuses to acknowledge the true state of his heart and continues to cling to his diseased thinking he will not accept help. For many, the vow, which seems to be a sign of genuine change, is actually an exercise in magical thinking. Change is much more painful than trying to buy God off with a confession and an apology! This is the primary reason the same people go down to a church altar Sunday after Sunday promising they will never repeat something, only to walk away unchanged. The reason there is no change in behavior is because they are trying to buy God off with, "I am sorry," rather than actually go through the painful process of changing. Repentance starts by getting out of denial, accepting responsibility for your behavior, and examining the way you responded to the trauma in the formative years. This will help you stop blaming your current state on childhood trauma and place the blame where it belongs - on your *response* to that trauma and the many ways you continue to choose to behave today. If a man seeks something sexual every time he is in need, the person, object or act is obviously his "god." The person need to repent for both the sinful way in which he has been behaving as an adult and for the way in which he responded to the trauma in the formative years.

**Step 6: Break the silence and enlist the help of others!** The addiction cycle is not only a powerful force in its own right it must be understood and worked through with the help of others. Satan builds his strongholds in secret and maintains them in silence! The addiction is too cunning, powerful and confusing to handle alone. However, the addict usually feels terror when he is told he has to share his secret sin with someone else. But not to tell and deal with the problem openly will only keep the person in bondage. The addict should establish at least one to three supportive relationships for the purpose of accountability. Without this accountability he will be deluded regarding

his motives, especially passiveness which keeps him from facing some hard truths and experiencing healing. All of this comes out in a group setting. With proper leadership, a group of men can learn things about themselves they would never discover in isolation. Not only can members of the group confront sexual behavior and addictive logic, they can help members of the group see the sinful and self-protective ways they are relating to others. If a group setting is not available, the addict should open himself up to the scrutiny of a counselor, pastor, an elder in church, or a trusted friend, and become accountable to that individual. A man should find another man; a woman should find another woman to serve in this position. Accountability and support are two different things. True accountability requires that someone have the fortitude to challenge motives, addressing the underlying need for love and acceptance the addictive behavior represents. Support means someone will stand by you and encourage you along. It is great when you can have both in one person. If the sex addict hopes to be free the addiction must be exposed and refuted on a moment-by-moment basis. Here are some guidelines for selecting someone to help.

- Look for someone who demonstrates mercy and compassion, yet has the grit to make you uncomfortable if necessary and force you to deal with motives, feelings, behavior, etc. (Jeremiah 17:9). The individual must have a grasp of truth and not be afraid to confront you.
- The individual must be able to hear the details of your story without backing away in disgust or fear.
- The individual must be a person who is comfortable with the expression of emotions and not require you conceal yours.
- He must be a genuine person of love and not someone who tries to fix everything with a Bible verse or Christian cliché, or see you as a project or ministry or someone to straighten out.
- He must be able to share with you how he is broken as well (if he doesn't think he is in some area of life he can't help you).
- He must keep confidentiality. He should never repeat what you share without your permission.
- He must understand you are likely to lie to him.

Obviously we usually don't share the intimate details of our lives with everyone, but in this case we must do so. Unfortunately, many gather once a week in men's groups to study the Bible or discuss theology without ever taking the risk of revealing their true selves with the others. If you are not sharing your life and feelings with other men in a way that sometimes scares you, you are not being transparent. Isolation is bad for anyone, but for the sexually addicted it is fatal! The addict is too embedded in his or her unique form of twisted logic to change without an outsider to point out his blind spots.

**Step 7: Embrace the grace of God.** Genuine recovery is only possible with divine help, namely the grace of God. We will never feel safe in our relationship with God, or have the freedom to fail, until we receive a revelation of God's grace. Most who try to break free of sexual addiction do not believe that God loves them unconditionally and can touch this area of their life. The addict may have allowed Jesus into every area of

his life except this one; reserving entire regions of his spirit for the addiction. Even if the addict does believe God can help him he is faced with a second question: "How do I let God into this part of my heart?" The answer is through the transformation power of God's marvelous grace. Grace is like a two-sided coin. Saving grace is the heads side; God's sustaining power which flows through us after we are saved is the tail side. You will experience four things when you receive a revelation of the grace of God for yourself. First, you will know without a shadow of doubt you have truly been forgiven and accepted by God. There will be closeness between you and Father God that cannot be expressed in words. Second, you will feel that your past life is irrelevant. It is not that you deny that you did something wrong, there will simply be a lack of connection between your past and the present. Third, you will no longer feel compartmentalized or dead on the inside. You will feel like a whole person. Fourth, and foremost, you will have the motivation and ability to live for God! Grace is God's ability in us. God is not working on His people; He is working in and through them! Grace will always bring about change because it is God in and through us. Consider these passages:

- Isaiah 26:12, "LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us."
- Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
- Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."
- Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
- Philippians 4:13, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."
- Acts 17:28, "'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'we are his offspring.'"

We are the clay, He is the Potter. Regardless of our circumstances we are strengthened from deep within by the living Christ through the Holy Spirit. I've learned over the years, while God always keeps His Word, He does not always do it in the manner or times I might expect. Don't become frustrated with this. Eventually, you will come to appreciate God's uniqueness instead of being frustrated by it. If we are born again, Christ is not sitting somewhere in the corner of our inner self providing eternal life to our spirit; He is at the center empowering us to live like He lived. Until you understand and embrace grace you will never be free and feel empowered by God. Furthermore, you will not have the freedom to fail, which only keeps you in the cycle of defeat. God's love is not based on your performance but on His unchanging nature of love. When He asks you to do something or trust in the Bible, it is purely for your benefit, not His. Grace has limits. God's marvelous grace not only has the power to set you free, it has the ability to keep you that way. No matter how wicked an individual, God is ready to forgive. All a person has to do to be set free is humbly repent and trust in Jesus (Ephesians 1:7-8; Ephesians 2:8). It sounds too easy doesn't it? That is

because we live in a society where you have to earn what you get - no free lunches. But eternal life is a gift that comes by faith in Jesus based on grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). If you try to earn something then it's not a gift.

A little short guy by the name of Zacchaeus is a good example of what grace can do when accepted. As a tax collector he made his money collecting more money than the Roman government required and pocketing the difference. He was a very rich man as a result of his thievery. The people hated Zacchaeus; the feeling was mutual. One day love, acceptance and forgiveness, Jesus, came to town and invited Zacchaeus to have fellowship with Him. This invitation changed Zacchaeus' life. Instead of giving Zacchaeus a lecture, Christ accepted him, knowing his flaws perfectly well (Luke 19:1-10). This grace-filled approach caused Zacchaeus to repent and give up his immoral behavior. The grace of God has been doing the same thing ever since. It will be grace, not guilt or condemnation, which will cause you to walk away from your sexual compulsion: Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age." You say, "I don't deserve to be treated this way." Of course you don't and neither does any other human being on this planet. What is so wonderful, we don't have to be. As Psalms 103:10 points out, "He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities." Accept God's grace and don't try to figure it out. In time you'll understand it better. For now, just accept it. You'll probably never fully understand the marvelous grace of God. And that is OK. You don't have to understand how an airplane lifts off the ground to fly in one. Instead of obeying God's Word in an attempt to silence the guilt and fear, grace empowers you to obey out of a heart of love and from a growing sense of safety in the Father's presence.

Grace will also give you the freedom to fail. Some may be troubled with that statement, especially when it comes to sexually compulsive behavior. We like to treat sexual sins different than other sins, but sin is sin. And, whether you extend grace to yourself or hold yourself to a ruthless standard of legalism, you will still fail from time to time! It is your nature to do so. God knows that. That's why He sent His Son to die for you. I'm not saying its okay to continue masturbating, looking at pornography or fantasizing, have pre-marital sex or have an affair on your spouse. With each event, you give away a little piece of your soul until there is nothing left (Proverbs 6:32). What I am saying is you are free to be imperfect!

One of Satan's tactics is to get us so bound up in doing everything right every time we fail we feel deflated. Learning to live with your mistakes and overcoming an addiction is like a baby learning to walk. Apart from genetic programming, a child learns to walk because his parents have created a safe environment for him/her to fail. When the baby loses its footing and topples over, the parents praise the child for trying: "Good job! Try again; you can do it!" In an environment of grace like this the baby is free to make the attempt over and over to walk because he knows he will not be penalized every time he hits the floor. That is the way we in the church should treat those who have repented and are trying to overcome an addiction, including sexual addiction. The individual who

hears criticism and condemnation, instead of encouragement for his efforts, will give up trying. What I am saying is an atmosphere must exist that allows for failure in order for a person to give up an old behavior and learn a new one. That atmosphere is God's grace. Foremost, you must grace your own mistakes. If you've turned your back on years of fornication or adultery but now and then step out of grace and masturbate, don't give up. While you may not be where you want to be you are not where you were. In time the other will also go. Have you ever heard someone say that forgiveness is not an emotion but a decision? Forgiveness is neither. Although forgiveness may start with a decision to forgive that affects one's emotions, forgiveness is a gift which comes from God's grace. God does not forgive you because you won't repeat a sin. You are forgiven based on justification by faith through your faith in His Son, Jesus (Romans 3:22; 5:1; Ephesians 2:8-9). You are accepted and declared righteous on the basis of what Jesus has already done for you and you believed it (Romans 1:16-17). So grace your mistakes and keep moving forward with your initial decision to break free. God will honor you for that decision.

**Step 8: Destroy all pornographic material in your possession and change your habits.** Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 2:1. There are two types of purity: the purity God imparts to us freely at regeneration (salvation) and the purity we ourselves develop by obeying the truth (sanctification). This second type of purity is not automatic. With the help of the Holy Spirit it is something we must continually work at (Galatians 5:16). While the divine work in our hearts is eternal and enduring, it is up to us to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. It is your responsibility to get rid of all pornographic material, paid TV channels that present nudity and sexual scenes; stop subscribing to or looking at magazines with nudity in them; stop renting sexually explicit videos of any kind, etc. You may even have to disconnect the Internet from your home computer if you are tempted to call up pornography. It is important that we remove any and all pornographic material from our home, car, office, and computer. There must be no exceptions! Don't throw it into the trashcan or give it to someone else – burn it! Not only must you get rid of the things that might tempt you to revert back to the addiction, you must guard your time alone. If you've had an addiction to pornography, don't stay up watching late night TV or get on the Internet when there is no one there to hold you accountable. Many, who otherwise would never have been exposed to pornography, have become addicted through the late night use of the Internet or "R" rated movies. You also need to stop masturbating. Since most masturbation is the payoff of pornography, when you stop looking at pornography masturbation should cease as well. Masturbation must stop whether pornography was involved or not. Spiritual maturity involves immediate obedience in specific situations and long-range character growth in others.

**Step 9: Discipline your mind and maintain a wholesome thought life.** First, you need to ask the Lord Jesus to cleanse your mind of the filthy images which have been imprinted in your mind. These images have been stamped or burned on the brain through the release of a hormone called epinephrine (ep'ə nef' rin). The only cure for this mind-altering addiction and the removal of the unwholesome images is the blood of Jesus and self control that is administered through the power of the Holy Spirit. If your

brain was conditioned over time to respond this way, you can also recondition it by what you allow in. The way to do that is found in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Here, Paul tells us to judge every thought which comes into our mind against what the Bible says and reject any thought or concept that does not conform to Scripture.

After you've asked the Lord to cleanse your mind and inner self of all evil that has been imprinted there on, set up a check in station in your conscious mind to filter out anything that is unwholesome which tries to come in. While you may not prevent an unwholesome thought from entering you can discard it before it becomes a part of the imagination. The problem many people have is they don't discipline their minds. They allow themselves to soak in all the garbage Satan tries to feed them through their material brain and send it right into the unconscious mind as truth. Paul states in verse 5, "Casting down arguments..." Defense mechanisms are arguments that surround the self in an effort to deal with unpleasant truth. That is why the addict must set up a check-in station in his conscious mind to discard any unwholesome thought before it reaches the unconscious mind. It's too late once the thought or concept reaches the unconscious mind. That is because the unconscious mind doesn't know what is and what isn't real. The conscious mind determines that. Jesus said, "Whosoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28) James tells us a double minded man is unstable in all his ways and can't expect anything from God. (James 1:7, 8) A doubled minded person is an individual who says one thing in the conscious mind but believes something different in the unconscious mind. This check-in station must occur in our spirit under the direction of the living presence of the Holy Spirit to capture, evaluate, and compare every thought against what God says in the Bible. Change the way you think and you change your life. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:7 there are people who are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." That's because they don't have a standard whereby to compare incoming information. The Bible and Jesus' example are sufficient to determine if a thought is of God or not. By internalizing the written Word (Bible) and exposing ourselves to the Living Word (Jesus), through prayer on a daily basis, we keep our minds renewed in Christ. (Romans 12:2). We need to compare it to the Bible when a thought or concept enters our conscious mind.

Read Romans 12:1-2. As you allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind, new neural pathways will be created to help you change direction to redirect the thoughts and attitudes of your heart. That is good news! The bad news is it doesn't happen overnight.

**Step 10: Read the Bible and commune with God, daily.** It is extremely important to have daily communion with our heavenly Father. I don't know about you but I am not strong enough to make it on my own. Engaging in real prayer is usually difficult for the sex addict because it requires him to be rational. That is the very thing the sex addict is not. If we are serious about getting to know God, own up to your superficiality and self-centeredness and ask God for assistance. Avoid the extremes of emotionalism and legalism, to be on guard against the tendency to use God like another drug (emotionalism) or manipulating Him through a formula of phrases and practices

(legalism). The person of God is a real, not a principle to be mastered. When you should converse with God daily, communion with God is more than a prayer. It is something deeper than words can express. It's a 24-hour a day "knowing" you are loved, accepted and being cared for. Regardless of what is going on in my life, there is never a moment in my waking hours of a day when I do not sense the loving presence and care of my heavenly Father.

Reading the Bible daily is absolutely essential for recovery. It is the only book that you read which reads you back. Daily, you need to let God through His Word reassure you that you are loved and accepted, and who you are in Christ. So, set aside time every day to read the Bible and meditate on what God is saying to you. By all means do not study the Bible out of obligation. To do so is like the man who rows out into the ocean and questions whether he needs a life preserver.

**Step 11: Don't maintain a close relationship with someone who is involved in pornography or living a sexual addicted lifestyle.** "Bad company corrupts good character" (1 Corinthians 15:33)!

## Section V – Helping Wives

A wife who discovers her husband is addicted to pornography, videos, masturbates or is having an affair may experience a wide range of emotions: shock; feel crushed; experience fear, anger and possibly bitterness, etc. Knowing her husband's sexual addiction is not about her should bring some initial relief, but it does nothing to soothe the profound ache in her soul. Whether he has been involved in an affair, anonymous sexual encounters, or years of staring at pornography, she will feel deeply violated and betrayed. While the wife needs to talk with someone, a sense of shame makes this difficult. But she needs to take two important steps immediately. First, she needs to give herself permission to grieve. Second, she needs to become surrounded with loving members of the body of Christ who understands what is happening to her and who will give her permission to grieve. The last thing this wife needs is for some well-meaning Christian to offer her insensitive comments and quick fixes or put her on a guilt trip over not immediately forgiving her husband. She will forgive her husband in time if she is a true Christian. For now she needs to be told its okay to hurt and not to "have it all together." Most wives go through five grieving stages:

**Step 1: Denial.** At first she can't believe this is happening. Or, she may display her denial by trying to minimize the situation, pretending it isn't that bad. Whistling a happy tune or "praising the Lord anyway," etc. All this is a way of avoiding the painful truth.

**Step 2: Anger:** It is normal for a wife to feel anger as a result of her husband's infidelity or acting out. E.g., "Why does he have to do that to get his needs met? What is wrong with him? What is wrong with me?" It is normal to have these kinds of feelings. However, the wife must not allow herself to get stuck in a state of anger. Not only is it unhealthy to remain in a constant state of anger; it can lead to a way of hiding from the deeper pain beneath it. Some women choose to stay at the anger level because it

seems to give them a sense of power over their husband - a way of punishing him. If not adequately dealt with, anger and bitterness can destroy the woman's soul (Ephesians 4:31) and future relationships should divorce occur. I've seen angry bitter women go from one bad marriage to another. The only remedy for un-dealt with anger and bitterness is God's grace (Hebrews 12:15).

**Step 3: Bargaining.** The wife may bargain by indulging in pornography with her husband or initiating inappropriate sexual activity in an attempt to pull him away from his "other mistress," sexual addiction. She may also bargain by doubling her prayer time, Bible study or religious activity in an attempt to manipulate a response from God or her husband.

**Step 4: Despair:** Inevitably, as she works through the grief process honestly, the wife will experience the depth of despair - facing the loss of her dream of the perfect marriage, the loss of trust, the loss of control, and the loss of reputation if others are aware of the situation.

**Step 5: Acceptance and decision to move on.** Coming to terms with the reality of her loss gives way to a true acceptance and ability to forgive, thus allowing her to move forward in a healthy fashion. Like others who grieve over losses, she may go through these stages of grief again and again. She may even go in and out of each stage until her heart has emptied itself of its pain. What she needs most at this point is a support network that will give her the space and grace to grieve while loving her enough to challenge some of her thinking so she will not get stuck in a stage. A woman may respond to her sexually addicted husband by becoming a doormat. Or, she may accept his behavior because she doesn't know what else to do. One woman, whose husband moved out for another woman, let him come home when he wanted to and have sex with her. Some wives run interference between her unfaithful husband and others trying to make him look better than he is or give the appearance they are a happy normal couple. She rationalizes away his every failure and her every disappointment. While she hides the truth from outsiders, she also hides it from herself. What she must realize is no matter how hard she tries to control him, no matter how hard she tries to be the "perfect wife," no matter how sexually available she is, she cannot heal or change her sexually addicted husband by being a door mat. Because it hurts so much, other women remain in denial, even when reality indicates it is happening. Some may even go on a campaign to win back her sexually addicted husband by performing various kinds of sexual exploits against her own conscious. This may include subjecting herself to things that are painful and humiliating. What she discovers is he is still not satisfied.

### **Seven steps wives can take for gaining freedom.**

**Step1: Admit it happened.** Only then can you accept the fact it happened. There is a difference between acknowledgment and acceptance. Acknowledgment is being able to say something is true. Acceptance opens the door to the grieving process. Acceptance is getting out of denial and accepting that he has a serious problem and that by association, you do too.

**Step 2: Set boundaries.** A boundary is a non-negotiable line or position which lets the other person know inappropriate sexual behavior or abusive treatment will not be tolerated, and she will not participate in her husband's emotional sickness. Unwillingness to set such boundaries results in codependent behavior that enables the husband to keep on acting out. There are two boundaries that need to be put in place immediately. They are sexual abstinence and relational abstinence. Sexual abstinence should exist until the husband takes responsible for his behavior. If there is the possibility of sexual involvement outside the marriage, he should be tested for HIV and other sexual transmitted diseases before resuming sex. If they had sex before the wife finds out about the infidelity, she should be tested as well.

After the sexual boundary is put in place, the wife should insist her husband get professional help or else (i.e., "You can't have the addiction and me... You can't have other women and me... You can't have pornography and me, etc.). She must be willing to carry out the "or else." Don't threaten him with an action you aren't willing to carry out and carry through with your threats. This way he will know you mean business. If he chooses not to go to a counselor, this still doesn't give the woman permission to demand, intimidate or attack. But she must stand by her guns and say, "If you choose not to seek help, I must make some choices of my own. The decision to remain together is not mine, it's yours." By all means, don't try to fix him; you can't. And don't get into guilt and condemnation for not giving him enough sex. Sex addiction is never about the wife - it is about the husband. I'm not saying she has no influence on her husband's behavior, but the issue of sexual brokenness is a lot bigger than that. A genuine sex addict is dealing with issues that predate his wife. Therefore, since she is not the cause, she cannot be the cure! This revelation may bring both comfort and pain. Comfort, because the wife finally sees this is not about her it's about him and parenting. Pain, because she realizes she cannot "fix" him and make him all better. This doesn't mean you don't care or you are washing your hands of your husband. It means you recognize you cannot solve his problem by nagging or worrying about the situation.

If the husband refuses testing and refuse to take responsibility for his action and go for counseling but want to resume sex, tell him, "If you don't value me and our relationship enough to deal with this issue, I choose not to entrust myself to you sexually." The husband may accuse his wife of being controlling and manipulative if he wants to, but the fact is, his choices have forced her to make choices of her own. Some wives go ahead and give themselves to their husband regardless of what he has done because they take responsibility for his actions, or feel pressed into it by a sense of guilt or desperately want to save the marriage. But to do so immediately is not to act in his or her best interest. Some Christian wives struggle with refraining from sex at all because of 1 Corinthians 7:4: "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife." What Paul is saying is a wife does not have the right to refuse her husband because she is angry, inconsiderate, resentful or selfish. But we are not talking about a situation like that. We are talking about a life-dominating sexual addiction. For the wife to submit sexually to a husband who is actively involved in this kind of behavior is to

encourage the continuance of his sinful lifestyle. When he begins taking responsibility for his actions, provided there is no threat of a transmitted disease, the sexual relationship can then resume.

**Step 3: Look out for codependency.** What the woman needs to understand is she may be battling her own dragon, codependency. Codependency is an addiction to the approval of others. The compliant needs the approval of others (especially her husband) so badly she will be whatever he and others want her to be. The two most common codependent relating styles are the *avoidant-compliant* and *enabler and the avoidant-persecuting enabler*. While these are opposite extremes of code-dependency, both work against the recovery of the sex addict. Let's examine them.

**Avoidant-compliant:** The avoidant-compliant enabler enables her husband to stay sick by not confronting. Instead of insisting he get help, drawing sexual boundaries, or getting healthy herself, she continues to act as though everything is okay. She denies the obvious, believes she can win him by manipulating his affections, or accepts the false guilt that his problem is somehow her fault. She should not accept anything short of his stopping all other relationships and all illicit activities! Though he may have occasional relapses at first with pornography or masturbation, she must determine, with the help of experienced counsel, whether each is a minor set back in an honest and diligent recovery process or a demonstration of his insincerity and lack of respect for her boundaries. Her response must be based on that determination. But the avoidant-compliant wife will not do that because she has a compulsion to please. The reason she feels this urgency to please is because she is terrified of rejection and desperately seeks approval. Just as her husband feels he has worth only when he is sexual, she feels she has worth only when she can do something for someone.

Another reason the avoidant-compliant spouse fails to hold her husband accountable for his actions is because she takes blame for his actions. That is why she fails to hold him accountable when he lies, makes excuses or accuses her of being paranoid, controlling or untrusting. His actions have already shown she has every right to be suspicious. But instead of confronting, the avoidant-compliant wife often "goes with the flow" because she believes that is what a godly wife is supposed to do, or because she is afraid of losing him. She doesn't understand there is nothing godly about enabling her husband in his destructive behavior. And, contrary to what she may believe, a sick relationship is not better than no relationship. In fact, it's worse.

**Avoidant-persecuting enabler:** The persecutor is stuck in the anger phase of the grieving process. She is never just angry about only her husband; she has a lot of anger from hurts she has suffered in the past as well. Her husband's betrayal serves as the focal point for all of her many years of unresolved anger. So whenever he fails, even in the slightest, she goes on the attack, making him pay for what he and every other person who has ever hurt her. The reason this person is called the avoidant-persecutor is because she uses her anger at her husband to avoid having to deal with her own issues. She makes him responsible for her feelings and feels justified in her resentful response. Like her sexually compulsive husband, she refuses to take

responsibility for herself and her emotions, holding him completely responsible instead. She creates an atmosphere in the relationship where failure of any kind is absolutely unacceptable. She is unconsciously on the lookout for his smallest deviation from her perfectionist ideal of what he is supposed to be and do. And, if she finds it—wham! Even if he is sincerely trying to change, she will sabotage his recovery by chipping away at his self-esteem every chance she gets. This causes him to begin to lose hope and to wonder what's the point is of working so hard when his efforts will never be good enough.

She enables his struggle to continue by demanding he stop his behavior but refuse to stop hers. She says she wants him to get better but because of her impossible high standards she insures he will fail miserably. The rare man who is able to move forward in spite of the persecutors constant attacks is often surprised when she hands him divorce papers just at the time when he is doing his best. She does this because her husband's healing and increasing maturity become an unavoidable contrast to her own unchanging bitterness and inflexibility. In other words, she needs him to stay sick!

The persecuting spouse and the compliant spouse both enable the behavior to continue – they just do it differently. The compliant spouse will put up with almost anything. The persecuting spouse has a very short fuse. The compliant one will allow her husband to be verbally and emotionally abusive. The persecutor draws her guns and opens fire the moment her husband makes a mistake. Unlike the compliant spouse, however, the persecutor has a clear sense of boundaries and won't let anyone step over them. Unfortunately, in an attempt to safeguard her own boundaries, she ends up violating everyone else's. The compliant takes care of everyone's needs except hers. The persecutor looks out for "number one" even though someone else's dignity gets destroyed in the process. Since she is so desperate for the approval of others, she attacks whenever she doesn't get it! The compliant must learn to draw boundaries and not be afraid of a fight for the sake of righteousness. The persecutor must learn how to lay down her weapons and become a warm and compassionate companion and affirm her spouse and his attempts at recovery. However, the persecutor is terrified of affirming others because she fears they will take it as a sign of weakness. Both types of personality must learn to respect their own boundaries and the boundaries of others. They must value their spiritual and emotional health even more than they value their false security, because, in the long run, that is the only thing that will truly help them or their husbands.

**Step 4: Deal with your own unfinished business.** It is hard for many wives to grieve and set boundaries because they lack inner strength due to their fear of abandonment. This is where a wife and her sexually addicted husband can be identical. He is holding onto his addiction in an attempt to meet emotional needs and avoid his loneliness. She maintains her unhealthy emotions and holds on him for the same reason! Both have a God-given need for love but are looking to the wrong sources to meet it. When the wife comes to understand this she will realize while she is a little better off than her husband, they are both idolaters! The wife must see her need for love is driving her to make choices that actually hurt her and her husband. Her love-need is not bad, but her

manipulative ways of trying to secure love are unhealthy. The reason it is hard for her to stop is because she is also broken. As she takes an honest look at her own issues, she usually finds that she, like her husband, was raised in a family environment where legitimate emotional needs were not met. Sometimes she was the “little mother” of the family, taking care of siblings, chores and, in some cases, parents. If she perceived that her needs and feelings were not important, she denied her feeling and focused on the needs of others. By spending all her time being what others wanted her to be insured her needs for unconditional acceptance and nurture went unmet. This was perfect training to become the wife of a sex addict. That’s why she was able to step right into the caretaking role when he came into the picture. Because she was made to believe her childhood needs didn’t matter, and she never learned appropriate boundaries, she is out of touch with her present needs. Consequently, she doesn’t know how to communicate honestly or address her needs in healthy ways. That is why it’s so important for her to take a candid look at her own issues. She will need outside support because she will tend to gloss over pain from her past and not deal with it honestly. While the spouse of a sex addict will pride herself on being honest, in reality, she is dishonest with herself about her own issues and about the truth regarding her husband.

**Step 5: Break out of your caretaking role.** The wife needs to stop fixing, rescuing, saving, ministering to and “helping” everyone and understand what she is doing it out of a need to be needed. If she were serving people the way they really needed to be served, she would let them carry more of their own responsibility (see Galatians 6:5). She must stop hiding from her own inadequacies behind a constant flurry of activity. She must stop blaming her husband for her feelings and choices and start taking responsibility for her own feelings. After all, she has no power to change her husband; she can only change herself, and then only with God’s help.

**Step 6: Let other people love and help you.** The codependent spouse likes to be the great benefactor to everyone else, but she hates to be on the receiving end. The fact is, as long as she is doing for everyone else, she can feel adequate and thereby protect herself from the deep sense of worthlessness that lurks within. The best thing she can do is to commit to a small group of women and say, “I need you. Can you love me and show me my blind spots?” She needs other women who will accept her, care for her and be there for her right where she is. She needs true sisters in the Lord who will affirm her value and love her enough to challenge her self-importance and gently confront her when she falls into old patterns.

**Step 7: Let God fill the emptiness.** This is the greatest area of confusion for the codependent spouse. She labors under the delusion God requires perfect performance. Only then, in her mind, can she feel acceptable and worthwhile. She has a difficult time reading the Bible and praying because it becomes one more place in which she can prove herself. She need to realize she is already accepted and have God’s unconditional love, something she desperately needs (Matthew 11:28-30). She must learn the secret of letting her guard down and allow God touch her at her point of emptiness. When she does, she will begin to feel accepted and worthwhile for whom she is, apart from what she does. From that place of security she can then begin

serving others out of her fullness rather than her deficit. Because she will be in a place where she can freely receive from God, she will be able to give freely to others (Matthew 10:8). The old, guilt-induced mentality will be replaced by a new freedom to live and love in a way closer to what God intended. Only then will she be in apposition to support her husband during his period of recovery.

## Section VI – Prevention

Here are some steps parents can take to prevent children from becoming sexual addicted.

**First**, make sure your children receive the needed love; acceptance and nurturing needed to be emotionally healthy in life. The best way to prevent sexual addiction is for nurturing during the eight years of a child's life. You say, but I don't have it in me to do that because my parents didn't give it to me. You are right. You can't give something you don't have. But you can receive the needed nurturing by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior and entering into an intimate relationship with God. In other words, the way you can provide the needed nurturing to your children, especially if your parents weren't nurturing, is to receive the nurture and nurturing God offers you through Christ Jesus. If you let God say to you on a daily basis, "You are my treasure - I love you and find incredible value in you" (Isaiah 43:4), you are likely to be saying it to your children. This is the kind of affirmation and nurture parents were intended to give. If you don't embrace intimacy with God you will never feel safe in your relationship with others, including your children. If you don't embrace the grace of God you will not have the freedom to fail or give your children the freedom to do so.

**Second**, courageously and honestly explore the dynamics of your original family, especially formative trauma and false self-concepts that might be lurking deep within the inner self. It is a must you uncover the false beliefs you have about yourselves and deliberately confront them, consistently, with the liberating truths of Scripture. Failure to do so results in psychological defeat and projection onto your offspring.

**Third**, try to understand your sexual ritual and the underlying need it symbolizes. You can learn much through this exercise.

**Fourth**, if you have a child with sexual issues break the silence and establish at least one to three supportive relationships for the purpose of accountability.

## Conclusion

Hopefully, this study has helped the reader have a better understanding into sexual addiction. People afflicted with sexual addiction have found little encouragement in the "quick fix" mentality of the Christian community of our day. This is because church leaders and counselors are treating sexual addiction and pornography at the sin level rather than at the root cause. Regardless how much Scripture or preaching one receives, the addiction will not go away as long as we treat the symptom and not the root cause. Because sexual addiction is *not about sex*, getting married does not solve

the problem. Sexual addiction is about someone trying to get legitimate, unmet needs through illegitimate means. These are the walking wounded, people with an inner brokenness of which they themselves are not aware of.

Sex addiction is not only about moral weaknesses; it involves emotional and chemical changes in the body. These changes have taken years to occur requiring extremely hard work to undo. Change is not accomplished through education alone. Promising to stop, reading the Bible and prayer help, but more is required. You may knock all the branches off the twisted tree of your past; but the trunk, with all its roots, will still be very much alive. Until the addict discovers the root cause behind his actions and goes through the process of transferring that need over to God, he'll never be able to break totally free. For some, this process requires extensive counseling. Unlike women, however, men aren't comfortable talking about their sexuality. That's because it puts their egos on the line, revealing their insecurity, as well as deep dark secrets. While they have feelings about sex, men are simply too afraid to talk about those feelings. Yet, a genuine sex addict cannot experience healing in isolation.

When a wife discovers her husband has a sexual addiction, or has been unfaithful, she should grieve, set boundaries, and face her own self. If she can let God and others love her back to wholeness she will be the kind of wife her husband needs to help him overcome this addiction. "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (Proverbs 31:30).

Let me conclude by stating God is not against sex. He designed sex to be beautiful within the bond of matrimony. The Holy Spirit often uses sexual imagery to explain our relationship to God. The Song of Solomon is an explicit poem about the king's pleasure in his wife. Jesus said this book testified of Him (John 5:39). The Song of Solomon expresses with passion what Paul in theological terms said in Ephesians 5:31-32. In other places, the Lord describes His relationship to us using the metaphor of attraction, courtship and marriage (see Ezekiel 16:1-14; Isaiah 54:4-7; Hosea 2:14-16; 19-20; Revelation 19:6-8). In fact, both John the Baptist and the apostle Paul saw themselves as "best men" as it were, presenting us to our rightful Lover, Jesus (John 3:28-29; 2 Corinthians 11:2). So God is not opposed to sex between a husband and his wife. Remember, sexual addiction is not about sex, however, but someone trying to meet legitimate, unmet needs, through illegitimate means.

## Questionnaire **BREAKING OUT OF SEXUAL ADDICTION**

Following each section, questions have been prepared to help you grasp the “meat” of the study. It is important that you completely read through each section before answering. If you need help understanding the material or have a question, please contact your Course Advisor at TEMO@nicevilleag.com.

1. Write down the writer’s define of sexual addiction
  
2. The sex addict may be attracted to an object, such as a woman’s undergarment, etc. The object itself brings a feeling of security and acceptance—a real person isn’t needed.  
\_\_\_ True \_\_\_ False
  
3. The sex addict is a hurting person who...
  - a. Never goes to church.
  - b. Is using objects, pornography, and others trying to meet a non- sexual need.
  - c. Is insane.
  - d. All of the above.
  
4. Match up the following comments with the different steps leading to sexual addiction:
  - a. Visual/emotional stimulation triggers a painful awareness of unmet nurturing needs. Step \_\_\_\_.
  - b. The person represses his painful emotions and replaces them with something sexual. Step \_\_\_\_.
  - c. Fantasizing and planning. Step \_\_\_\_.
  - d. Becomes intoxicated emotionally. Step \_\_\_\_.
  - e. The connection occurs in step five when contact is made with a real person or a symbol that leads to the fulfillment of the addict’s fantasy. Step \_\_\_\_.
  - f. The act. Step \_\_\_\_
  - g. The chemical payoff. Step \_\_\_\_.
  - h. The let down. Step \_\_\_\_.
  - i. Vow and denial. Step \_\_\_\_.

5. Signs of sexual addiction can be...
  - a. An obsession with sex and age inappropriate behavior.
  - b. Exploding, withdrawing or become manipulative when he does not get his way.
  - c. A display of childish coping mechanisms and inner suffering
  - d. Masturbation and addiction to pornography.
  - e. All of above are true.
  
6. Three hindrances to recovery are...
  - a. Refusing to go see the Church counselor.
  - b. Not being old enough to understand what's involved.
  - c. Fear of exposure, the belief he is the only person who can take care of his needs and feeling of hopelessness.
  - d. Not being able to pray daily, read the Bible daily, witness, etc.
  
7. Examining one's childhood and parenting; identifying those parts of the woman's body one is obsessed with; transferring nurturing needs over to God; repentance; breaking the silence; embrace grace; destroying all pornography in one's possession; discipline one's mind; maintaining constant communion with God; and stop maintaining close relationship with those involved in pornography are steps...
  - a. To recovery.
  - b. To prevention.
  - c. A wife should take when she finds her husband has had an affair.
  - d. All of the above.
  
8. A wife who discovers her husband is addicted to pornography, videos, masturbates, or is having an affair, may experience a wide range of emotions. Name two of them:
  
9. Most wives who discover their husband have been unfaithful go through the grieving process.  
 \_\_\_ True \_\_\_ False.
  
10. Name the five stages of the grieving process:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Have you ever become stuck in one of these stages over something that happened to you? If so, how did you get past it? Or, are you still there?

12. Which of the following statements is correct?

- a. When a Christian wife finds out her husband has been unfaithful to her she should (1) ignore the incident and immediately have sex with him to show him she is a good wife; (2) try to hold on to him at any cost and let him have the freedom to do whatever he wants; (3) tell as many people in the church as possible about his problem; (4) hold this over his head as long as you are married to him; (5) try to fix him; (6) isolate herself from other women in the church; and (7) let God fill her emptiness.
- b. When a Christian wife finds out her husband has been unfaithful to her she should (1) admit it happened; (2) set boundaries; (3) look out for codependency; (4) deal with her own unfinished business; (5) break out of her caretaking role; (6) let others love and help ; and (7) let God fill the emptiness she feels inside.

13. In Section V, the writer presents four steps parents can take to prevent sexual addiction in their children. In your opinion, which is the most important step and why:



**Answers Sheet**  
**BREAKING OUT OF SEXUAL ADDICTION**

1. Sexual addiction is an *obsessive-compulsive relationship with a person, object or experience for the purpose of sexual gratification.*
2. T
3. b
4. Match up the following comments with the different steps leading to sexual addiction:
  - a. Step 1
  - b. Step 2
  - c. Step 3
  - d. Step 4
  - e. Step 5
  - f. Step 6
  - g. Step 7
  - h. Step 8
  - i. Step 9
5. e
6. c
7. a
8. Shock; feel crushed; experience fear, anger and possibly bitterness, etc.
9. T
10. Denial, anger, bargaining, despair and acceptance.
11. Student provides the answer.
12. b.
13. All are important!
14. While all of the steps are important, making sure children receive the needed love; acceptance and nurturing during the formative years is the most important prevention.