

5 STEPS TO
BREAKING
FREE
FROM PORN

JOE
DALLAS



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover photo © Craig van der Lende / Stockbyte / Getty Images

Cover by Dugan Design Group, Bloomington, Minnesota

FIVE STEPS TO BREAKING FREE FROM PORN

Copyright © 2013 by Joe Dallas

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

ISBN 978-0-7369-5336-8 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-5338-2 (eBook)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 / BP-JH / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

A WORD FROM JOE

This book is written to and for you if you have a porn problem because, sadly, it's a problem hugely affecting the Christian population. Perhaps you're a guy who has the problem, but not the beliefs expressed in this book. In short, you may not be a Christian. If that's the case, I'm grateful you picked this up, and I sincerely hope that, whatever your worldview, you'll find some helpful principles and suggestions in these pages.

I'd be less than honest, though, if I didn't point out the need to get to the root of the problem, which is much more than porn. It's the human condition. You can certainly improve your life by eliminating pornography from it, and I hope you will. But eternal questions still need to be answered. If they remain unanswered, then you'll have only scratched the surface by going porn free.

So please, once you've finished reading the chapters, spend some time thinking over the steps to knowing God that are listed at the back of the book. Because in the end, my friend, nothing matters more than having full assurance that you're ready to meet Him, and Jesus Christ has made the provision for you so you can have that confidence.

God's best to you,
Joe

CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| A Word from Joe | 3 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| Step 1: Access | 19 |
| Step 2: Accountability | 31 |
| Step 3: Awareness | 43 |
| Step 4: Amends | 53 |
| Step 5: Anticipation | 63 |
| Appendixes | |
| A: What About Masturbation? | 71 |
| B: Knowing God | 75 |
| Notes | 77 |

STEP 1: ACCESS

Removing Access to the Problem Is More Than Half the Battle

Positioning Scriptures

[Jesus said,] “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:29-30).

Flee also youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22).

Bear fruits worthy of repentance (Luke 3:8).

Principles

Principle 1: If you can, then you will.

Never underestimate the power of the familiar. Therein lies much of a habit’s strength—familiarity. There are probably scores of things you do daily out of habit without even realizing it. For instance, the way

you brush your teeth, the times of day you drink coffee, what you do to soothe yourself when you're nervous or bored. We were all created with a capacity to adopt an array of routine behaviors. And we do—some good and some not so good.

So it is with lust, one of the most formidable of all habits. And I'll bet you developed this habit early in life. When we discover the rush we get when viewing sexually attractive images, we find the warm security blanket of lust. It wraps around us and heats us up from head to toe as chemicals rage and blood rushes, drawing us into a private, powerful pleasure. This usually occurs in the preteen years. When puberty kicks in and we discover masturbation, the combination of mental images (fantasies, memories) or visual ones (porn, attractive women, suggestive pictures delivered via media) plus self-stimulation creates a potent, unforgettable cocktail. And any powerful experience that brings pleasure is, by its very nature, one we want to repeat...often.

Aggravating the problem is the general approval today's culture stamps on lust. Think about it. How many products are marketed through erotic images? How many attractive bodies draped in bikinis or Speedos are utilized to promote beer, cars, CD players, and almost everything else? How many songs did we grow up on that extolled the "normalness" of fueling sexual arousal by looking at someone attractive? How many times did we hear "Atta boy!" in the locker room after verbalizing our desire for a certain young beauty?

Lust not only comes naturally; it comes with applause. Small wonder then that so many men are absorbed by it—sometimes secretly, often openly. (You’ve probably noticed the centerfold beauties overseeing the work at many machine and car shops.) It’s hard enough wrestling with lust, but when our culture tells us it’s not a problem it’s even more difficult.

If you wrestle with porn, you’re taking on a strong habit with easily accessible materials that delivers potent impact and is openly approved of and shared by millions. No wonder you’re struggling.

Let’s look for a moment at what you’re struggling against in biblical terms. A number of Hebrew and Greek words have been translated as the English word “lust” in the Old and New Testaments. The one most applicable to our subject is found in Proverbs 6:25. Referring to a wanton woman, the author warns, “Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.” The word used in the Old Testament (written in Hebrew) is *chamad*, meaning “to desire covetously with delight.” The corresponding word in the New Testament, which was written in Greek, was *epithymeo*. Jesus used this word when He described lust as a form of sexual sin (whether acted on or not). This is the most frequently used Greek term in the New Testament that refers to lust. *Epithymeo*, similar to the Hebrew *chamad*, means to “covet what is forbidden.”

To “sexually lust” is “to want and dwell on what’s

not rightfully yours.” If you’re married, your desire for your wife doesn’t qualify as lust since a sexual union with her is rightfully yours to enjoy. But to sexually covet someone or some experience outside of marriage is to violate your Creator’s intent. It’s a pleasurable violation that delivers high impact, certainly, but a violation nonetheless.

And here’s the rub. If you’ve developed the habit of entertaining that violation through porn, then you’ve trained your body—your brain, your pleasure receptors, your genitals—to expect that high-impact. That expectation became a physical craving, and your ability to resist it was weakened each time you gave in. It was weakened to the point that as long as the stuff is available, you’ll use it despite your best intentions and most fervent promises to God, to your wife, to yourself. That is the power of the familiar—a power you’ve no doubt experienced time and again.

Jesus, spot on and as wise as ever, didn’t say, “If your hand offends you, try to reform it. Or pray for it. Or send it to therapy to see why it offends you.” Rather, He plainly advised, “Cut it off.” He’s saying whatever sin you’ve gotten accustomed to, you should have no confidence in your ability to just say no. Instead, distance yourself from it as much as possible and remove your ability to indulge in it.

If you *can* access porn, then most likely you *will*. If you’re serious about stopping porn use, you’ve got to distance yourself as much as possible from the porn

itself. If you're not ready to do that, you're not ready to stop.

Principle 2: What the heart rejects, the brain records.

When you're serious about overcoming porn, you can get into a pretty ferocious wrestling match with your brain. That's because it records significant experiences and files them for future reference. When it determines you may need their benefit, it brings them to mind, reminding you of the experience. That's part of your brain's function. Sometimes this function is great. When you discover that a particular type of aspirin helps you get over a headache, your brain records the brand name of the aspirin for future reference. Next time a headache comes on, your brain reminds you what worked to relieve it in the past so you'll use it again.

But here's where it gets dicey. Your brain also records less legitimate actions and experiences that helped you forget, feel soothed, feel great, even if the actions clash with your moral values. So when you discovered how porn helped you temporarily forget, helped soothe you, and caused excitement and pleasure, your brain recorded all of those benefits just as surely and clearly as it recorded the brand name of the aspirin that worked. So the next time you feel boredom, stress, or discomfort, the option of porn barges into your head like an unwelcomed pop-up on your computer. It reminds you, based on past experience, that

the stuff worked and provided relief. You may be convinced porn is wrong. You may be determined with all your heart to never use porn again and, through repentance, reject it. But what the heart rejects, the brain has already recorded, making the option of porn an undesirable but lifelong addition to your brain's filing system for coping strategies.

Principle 3: Temptation doesn't change; resistance capacity does.

Many approaches to overcoming sexual sin offer results, including healing and transformation, and to a point I fully agree and celebrate that. Life deals all of us some pretty treacherous blows, leaving us wounded and downright broken in a number of ways. When we come to Christ,

- He restores our souls (Psalm 23:3).
- He heals our broken hearts (Luke 4:18).
- He transforms our minds (Romans 12:2).
- He changes us from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).

These are indisputable realities of Christian living. But these changes occur in our souls and spirits, not in our flesh. Our flesh is that fallen, old nature of ours inherited from Adam. Our flesh has some truly ugly qualities, as described by the apostle Paul:

- It never gets better (“For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] nothing good dwells,” Romans 7:18).
- It hosts a population of horrendous impulses (“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness...” Galatians 5:19).
- It’s locked in a constant battle with the Holy Spirit (“The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish,” Galatians 5:17).

Ultimately, a struggle with porn is a struggle with the flesh. And the flesh is a part of us that, in this life, will never be healed. It is what it is, and immune to reformation. Because the flesh can’t be reformed, made better, or healed, Scripture advises us to:

- Refuse it (“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” Romans 6:1-2).
- Put it to death (“Put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of

these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,” Colossians 3:5-6).

- Walk in the Holy Spirit to remain free of the flesh’s power (“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh,” Galatians 5:16).

Temptation in our flesh is guaranteed in this life. God will not take it away. Rather, in the face of fleshly temptation, God gives us strength we didn’t have before and authority over our flesh to deny it. This principle matters because it influences our approach to handling temptations. Either we’ll yield to them, wait for them to stop, or wisely be prepared to deal with them in our newfound strength of walking in the Holy Spirit.

Temptation to use porn will continue in your life—sometimes a lot, sometimes a little. Its presence is no indicator that you’re doing anything wrong. It only means you’re a new creature still residing within a sinful body in a sinful world. Part of your residential responsibility is to deal with the ongoing fact of temptation. God will not remove it from your life. He will gladly empower you to meet that enemy armed and ready with His Word, His principles, and His Spirit within you. And with that kind of equipment and help, temptation may continue to be a pain in the butt, but it need never master you. Jesus met it head on and mastered it. And within the trinity, He resides within you in

the form of the Holy Spirit, so it's doubly reassuring to consider that "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Therefore, "sin shall not have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14).

Practices

1. If you've been using porn via the Internet, immediately sign up for the "Covenant Eyes" software by going to www.covenanteyes.com. This site not only monitors your online use, but it will also send a regular and detailed report of your browsing history, week by week, to a third party of your choice. So once you've signed up with Covenant Eyes, you'll never again be able to tell yourself that no other person will know what you've been looking at. This is one of the most effective programs I know of...and one of the most essential. If you're married, I urge you to have a report sent to your wife and one other accountability person. Be sure to get it installed on your cell phone, iPad, tablets, and any other Internet access tools you have.
2. If you've been watching inappropriate material via cable, immediately get the channels offering that material off your package or get another cable package altogether. Don't assume you can resist the channels offering this material. By now you know how hard it is to resist. If you can't get

it off your cable system completely, set up the parental controls or have someone else do it so you won't know the password.

3. Do an honest and thorough inventory of the material you watch for entertainment, whether television, DVDs, films, books, or magazines. Ask yourself if it contains images that make you susceptible to lust. Whatever doesn't pass that test should go. *Toss it out now.* There's no point in abandoning porn just to replace it with "porn lite."

Prayer

Father, I know I've been taking something unclean into my heart and mind, and it's taken its toll. It's darkened my thinking, hardened my heart, perverted my views, distracted me from what matters, disrupted my most intimate relationships, and hugely offended You. For all of this I'm so sorry. I'm choosing right now to stop my involvement with porn once and for all.

To stop, I need Your mind, Your heart, Your strength. I've given myself to this destructive habit so many times that it's lost its ability to shock me. I hate to admit it, but I've gotten comfortable with something You abhor. Cause me to see this sin as You see it—in all its depravity. Cause me to view it as poison and hate its content and effects as You do. Cause me to remember

the wasted lives of the women and men involved in this product, and remind me how contradictory it is for me to say I love people but then use something that exploits them in such a primitive way.

Give me a holy, white-hot hatred for this habit I've trained myself to allow. Give me Your indignation over the fact that I, one of Your children, so stupidly and deliberately gave myself to something so dark. Then give me the strength to renounce it not once but every time the temptation rears its ugly head. I want to experience such a close relationship with You that I won't allow anything, much less something so destructive and foolish as porn, to ever come between us again.

In the name of my Lord Jesus, who was tempted in all areas yet remained sinless, I pray. Amen.