

Letter from a Recovering Teen Sex Addict

To Whom It May Concern:

I have struggled with sexual addiction for the better part of 6 years now. This began when I was about 15 years old. I began innocently viewing some of my friend's magazines that he had taken from his father's closet which was stocked full of pornography. It was shocking, but appealing like many new and secretive things can be. His father's magazines quickly gave way to his videos. That is the saddest part, I think. That this problem can begin in a way that many people consider a completely natural progression of events for a teen beginning puberty. However, that only gives way to the point that this can exist within anyone, and in many cases you have no idea a person is struggling until it is too late for them to recover from this taboo addiction.

The magazines and videos stirred me to just want more. Being a Christian this was very difficult. I was always being pulled to get away from this thing that I found so appealing. But, at this age I was discovering exactly what it meant to live "by the flesh." I began to masturbate to these videos and magazines. At this early stage it was easy to logically convince myself that this wasn't a problem, and that it was natural. It gave me a wonderful feeling and I didn't understand the full ramifications of what this would do to me in my future. (Let it also be known that at the same time that I was dealing with this, I had multiple friends who were going through the same things there with me looking at the same videos. Unfortunately they didn't have the luxury of a Christian upbringing. I say this so that you know that I am not the exception, but at least in the beginning stages of all of this, I am the rule.) All I knew was that what I was doing was wrong, but it was too taboo to discuss with anyone. I was stuck in a catch 22, and it was miserable. I had never experienced anything that I knew was wrong, but enjoyed so much that I would deny God's will openly to do it repeatedly. I never dealt with drugs, alcohol, or even cursing. But this began to take me over in ways I couldn't understand.

Around this same time I began dating a girl who only fueled my sexual desires. I enjoyed the videos and movies so much that I wanted to experience some of what I saw for myself. We used one another sexually for 11 months while at the same time attending church every Sunday without anyone knowing. During this relationship was the first time I tried to get away from the movies and videos, but I found that I couldn't. I tried to use her and our time together as a substitute for the pornography, but it was no use. Eventually I broke off that relationship, knowing it was not pleasing to God. Even if I couldn't please him in every way, I figured that was a step in the right direction.

I felt so ashamed at this point. I knew I was addicted, but I didn't care. I would've sat around looking at movies all day if I could. But as soon as I masturbated, the shame would set in and I would throw the movies in the trash (only to pull them out an hour later) vowing never to look at them again.

Around this time the internet entered the picture. I never realized what the internet had to offer in the form of pornography. But one day while messing around I saw something pop

up. It caught my curiosity and led me to a porn site. I started looking around and seeing what I could find. I began spending a few minutes and feeling ashamed. By the end of this addiction, I was spending 10 hours in front of the computer if I could. I began by just looking at regular porn sites. But if you are at all familiar with pornography you know that there are multiple levels of it. I began looking for more hardcore stuff because I was no longer satisfied with what I was looking at. I felt like a drug addict who moved up from one drug to a harder one. It became a sort of game for me. The search became the addiction. The thrill of knowing that what I find on the next site could be what I'm looking for to really get me going. This is a sick thought, but just as you are engulfed as a drug addict, you are engulfed in the same way into pornography.

I had many instances of "repentance" within the church service. But none of it really meant anything because I had no real dedication to escaping it. So I was falling further and further from God. I was a mess and I was spiritually terrified. I knew that I would go to hell if Christ returned. I loved God so much, and I understood everything he had done for me, I wanted so much to follow his will, but I couldn't stop. (I chose not to stop, but I couldn't see that at the time).

At this point I began becoming more creative, I began going into chat rooms to find women/girls who would have cyber sex with me. Eventually that grew boring. I started giving out my phone number to get them to call me to have phone sex. I would buy phone cards so I could call them without having a charge on the phone bill. This is so dangerous, but I didn't care. I began looking for different types of girls, ones on all the fringes of pornography. Really extreme women, or young women who were willing to talk to me on the phone. I was sick and acting terrible and feeling shameful. I am thankful I never went the next step of setting up a meeting between myself and any of these girls.

Many wonder where my parents were in all of this. I was very deceitful and they didn't catch on for years. I would get up in the middle of the night after they went to bed and get on the computer and clear the internet files when I was done. I prayed repeatedly for deliverance and to be purified. I hated myself and I had no one I trusted to go to at this point. I kept wishing I had gone to someone when I was just looking at those magazines years ago. But now I was so far out there that I felt I was more taboo than anything anyone had ever experienced and so I could tell no one, just live in my own personal hell that I had created for myself.

My addiction came to an abrupt awakening when I came home from school one day and found a card on the mailbox from a local detective. My stomach dropped. I was about 17 at this point. I went in and my mother was crying. She told me that the detective had come by to ask her some questions about me. Apparently, one of the people I was trying to get to call me was lying about who he was online and when I gave him my phone number he gave it to his babysitter who called the local police, who called the FBI, who called the SBI, who came to my house. It was a miserable experience to have my parents find out in this way. They are wonderful parents who had no idea.

I went in and was talked to by the SBI detective and he told me that the road I was headed down was going to land me in jail. He said I he was going to let me off but he spent a long time explaining to me the ramifications of my actions and what could happen to not just me but my whole family. For a few weeks it was helpful, but I eventually went back.

I have spent the last 4 years of my life in a cycle of recovery and failures. I had no clear knowledge of how to get away from this life. This lead to everything from wanting to hurt myself to wanting to run away, or even to ending my life because I wanted so badly never to hurt anyone else, and to stop displeasing God. What a miserable existence.

None of the counselors I went to had any idea how to handle this struggle. They were as confused as I was. I wish I had someone who understood what this was all about. I wish I had someone who could've helped me early on to help keep me from going through much of the spiritual, and emotional pain I went through later on that I will deal with for many more year regardless of being away from the pornography.

Finally, I want to express to you the broad spectrum of people who suffer from this in some way. I will be the first to tell you that I am an extreme case. However, I will also be the first to tell you that I do not have a single male friend who does not in some way struggle from the guilt associated with looking at pornography and the guilt associated with the masturbation that accompanies it. I am referring to a CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CAMPUS. I cannot fathom the struggles on a State campus.

Thankfully, I am now in recovery after talking with someone who was finally very helpful to me. I haven't looked at pornography or masturbated in over 5 months. After living 5 years of doing both of these things up to 4 times a day this is a huge accomplishment and it is God who I credit with this success. But I had to be pointed to God in order to make that happen.

Living in the Freedom of Christ -- Anonymous