

HUGH HOUSTON

JESUS IS BETTER THAN PORN



HOW I CONFESSED MY ADDICTION TO
MY WIFE AND FOUND A NEW LIFE!

Jesus Is Better Than Porn!

How I Told My Wife About My
Addiction and Found a New Life

By Hugh Houston

Introduction

I chose to write this using a pen name in order to share my most intimate thoughts while maintaining my privacy. My wife and I have been missionaries for most of our adult lives. We have four adult children.

This is not a book of statistics on porn. If you picked this book up, I imagine it's because you are personally acquainted with this problem. You or someone you know is struggling, perhaps drowning, as a result of the compulsive use of pornography.

My aim is to share my story as you consider your own story. I have tried to be concise, practical, and helpful while being truthful, impactful, and straight to the point. Most of all, I pray that in these pages you will find hope—hope for a better tomorrow; hope for a new and better you!

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Chapter One

A Deep Dark Hole

I felt trapped. I couldn't take it anymore, and I was scared to death. I knew that if I didn't do something quickly, my secret sin was going to get much, much worse.

I was 50 years old, and it felt like I had been fighting lust, masturbation and pornography my whole life. I remember playing "doctor" with kids on my street when I was about six years old. But my first real encounter with pornography came when I was a teenager and went to spend the night with my cousins.

They lived in another state and I didn't see them very often. My family always went to church, but my cousins never did. There were three brothers and two were older than me. I still remember they all shared a bedroom that had two double beds. Along one of the walls there was a desk, and that night at bedtime, one of my cousins opened a large drawer on the side of the desk and revealed a tall stack of Playboy magazines.

I had never seen one of those in my life. That night I flipped through several magazines. Some of those images were burned into my brain. I still remember the rush I felt as the adrenalin pulsed through my body. Was it an addiction at first sight? I can't say. I just know that in spite of the fact that I had been taught differently, from then on, I began to seek out opportunities to take another peek and feel that same rush.

When I got my driver's license, I had a bit more freedom. Whenever I got the chance to stop at a convenience store, which in those days had men's magazines on the rack with everything else, I would look for another shot of excitement. I knew that as a follower of Jesus it was wrong for me to desire to have sex with these women, yet that didn't stop me. One day, when my sister

had come along with me to a department store, she caught me looking at a Penthouse magazine. I was tremendously embarrassed, but not enough to seek help. The urge within me just kept pulling me back.

A few years later I went away to college, where I ended up studying theology and preparing to become a missionary. I fell in love with a wonderful Christian woman who is still my wife to this day. Like many guys, I thought having a wife and a healthy sexual relationship with her would cure my desire to look at porn. I was dead wrong.

I remember after we had children, getting out of bed late at night after everyone was asleep, sneaking into the living room and flipping through all the channels, hoping to catch a glimpse of something X-rated. Now when I think about this I feel so ashamed and embarrassed. One year I went to a men's retreat and while there I felt so close to the Lord. I repented of my sins and renewed my vow to live only for Him, but when I arrived home late at night I turned on the television to seek out those lusty images one more time. What was wrong with me?

When the Internet came along my problem got infinitely worse. Now, I didn't have to flip through channels to find something on TV or go out to a newsstand somewhere, hoping to find a magazine without a plastic cover on it. All of a sudden, what my sinful self craved was right at my fingertips, available with the click of a mouse. One day I was in my office looking at something obscene on a site and my oldest son walked into the room. I didn't know how to navigate out of it quickly, so I just reached up and turned off my computer monitor. Later I wondered what he thought, but not even that scare kept me from going back for more. The months and years trudged on with no relief in sight.

After binging episodes, before I turned off the computer, I would make sure to wipe my search history clean and erase all of the cookies from my browser. Then I would vow to myself and to God that this was the last time I would ever look at porn. This happened dozens, if not hundreds, of times. Each time I promised God and myself that I wanted out of this predicament, vowing that this time I would try harder and this time I really meant it. I now know that the worst lies are the lies we tell ourselves. It's been said

that porn is a lot like throwing yourself off a cliff. You get a great rush all the way down, right until you smash into the rocks below. Who in their right mind would throw themselves off a cliff for the thrill of the fall?

Up to this point our internet service had been dial-up. I had resisted getting a higher speed connection because I knew it would spell big trouble for me, but my wife and our son really wanted broadband. They kept insisting, so one day I finally gave in.

And that's the day, with the Lord's help, I began to use the Internet, which had opened the door and allowed so much evil to enter my life, to seek help.

What is porn anyway and why is it so bad? In Matthew 5, Jesus discusses murder, adultery, divorce, etc. In each of these situations the great sin which separates us from God is the fact that we have turned a human being, made in his image, into an object of anger, scorn, lust, etc. God is love. As his children he wants us to love everyone. It's impossible to live for God while transforming his children (our brothers and sisters) into mere objects. This is why pornography is so hideous. To lust after another person degrades and devalues another human being as a "thing" to be used for our own personal self-gratification. Pornography is dehumanization at the most intimate level of our being. That's why it's so ugly. And in the end we dehumanize ourselves in the process. This is as far as we can get from the heart of God.

How was it that one day I finally did something about this compulsive cycle of sin? What was different that day when things actually started to change?

Certainly, God was present. He touched my heart and planted in me a drive to finally search for help. Yet He is always there and certainly more than willing to rescue the perishing. I can't really say why I took that step on that day, other than because I was deathly afraid of my craving for porn getting exponentially worse. I was desperate, like a guy who is drowning and knows he is about to go under for the last time.

I know that I should have confessed my sin to a friend or to someone at church. But I was the pastor. I was the one everyone looked up to, who taught everyone how to do what was good and

right. How could I confess my hypocrisy? That fear kept me quiet. My dark, dirty secret was like an albatross around my neck.

Thankfully, I found a support board for men (and a few women) who were trying to break free from pornography addiction. I read articles about how the addictive cycle works and testimonials of those who had changed their lives. I pored over personal threads and journals, where people write about their struggles and their victories. I began to go to the board every day and write in my own journal about my goals and my desire for a new life. It certainly wasn't easy to break free, but as I voiced my feelings, I began to find hope. I could see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Writing down my thoughts, feelings, and observations helped me see and identify my mistakes more clearly. My journal enabled me to discover where I had been going wrong and see what I needed to work on. I learned that by maintaining these sinful habits for so many years, I had gone against the values that I claimed to believe and cherish. I saw that I had swallowed many deceptions from the father of lies. One by one I had to identify those falsehoods and replace them with the truth and allow the Light to expel the darkness.

One day I wrote out a short list of lies I had often told myself:

- These pictures of ladies are harmless, really.
- Every man does it. It's just normal male behavior.
- It's okay to ogle women; I'm supposed to find beautiful women attractive.
- I'm not hurting anyone. I'm only looking.
- I'm not having an affair or involved with another woman. I would never do that.

If it was all so innocent, why did I feel guilty and ashamed? Why did I hide my activity from my wife? Why would I go back and look time after time, when I had promised the Lord and myself that I would never go there again?

I resolved never to treat any woman as a sex object again. Instead, I would endeavor to look at all people; men and women, young and old, and see an eternal soul. Determined not to believe the lies any longer, I first confessed my sins and then abandoned them.

He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have
mercy.
Proverbs 28:13

Author Edward Fudge wrote:

“I have found that it is quite impossible for me to rise above sin in my own strength, and sometimes, like quicksand, it seems to gain power the more I struggle. Yet my experience is that when I yield to temptation, it is always because I DECIDE to do so. My will sins before my body does. I need supernatural assistance at the decision level. There is a way of escape, however, which is to put the problem before the Lord something like this, on a repeated basis, as often as needed.”

"Lord, I have this struggle against (X-sin). I cannot resist in my own power. No matter how I determine in advance when the moment comes, I find myself wanting to do the forbidden thing. I cannot desire to do the right thing myself. Lord, I honestly do DESIRE to do the right thing. I am WILLING to desire to do the right thing. But you must empower me to have a godly desire when temptation comes. I yield my WILL to you. At this moment, Lord, please work in me to WILL what you want."

Without a doubt, this is the very first step. You and I have to want a new life. We have to desire it enough to pay the price and do whatever it takes to move forward into true and lasting change. Are you willing to tell the Lord right now that you desire and are willing to do the right thing? Pray and turn your will over to the only One who can rescue you.

Renewing your desire for God's help is not a one-time event. It has to be a continual process, one day at a time, one hour at a time, one minute at a time. Today I pray that you will make this decision to do what is right. I pray that you will ask the Lord for help and take this first step down the road to freedom. Because freedom is a glorious blessing from above!

Points to Ponder

Questions for Discussion Groups

1. What is there in your life that you know you need to change but you have not changed yet? Perhaps you want to lose weight or you have anger issues, or like me, you find yourself hopelessly entangled in addiction.
2. Why do you want to change? What factors have prevented you from changing?
3. How badly do you desire to change? How would your life be different if you did?
4. What makes sin wrong?
5. What would you like to ask God in prayer today?

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