

# “Men Have Always Looked at Pornography—What’s the Big Deal?”

**Men have always looked at pornography—what’s the big deal?**

I asked for insight on this question from my friend Emily Efurd, a licensed marriage and family counselor who has been working with sex addicts for over a dozen years. She writes:

The one thing we know from the Bible is that men and women are different. Many people take a statement like that and do a lot of damage with it, but what I mean is that God created them to be different. One of the major differences is that men are sexually aroused by visual stimuli and women are sexually aroused by feeling special, cherished and loved. Many men believe that looking at pornography makes them better lovers for their wives. Unfortunately these men are hacking away at their marriage one piece at a time. Let me tell you a story about a man named Frank.

Frank was well into his twenties when he married. He and his wife had life all planned out. They would mature in the marriage for a few years, then have a family, which they did, with a boy and a girl. He was a professional, had a good job, was a great dad and even went to church occasionally. Frank’s pornography habits were known by his wife, she even shared in watching some of his videos, but she soon grew bored with it. Frank did not get bored with it. His viewing pornography escalated beyond *Playboy* and videos to “peep shows” and trading or buying some “really great stuff” on line. Because his wife didn’t look anymore she missed out on some great things he saw, so he began to ask her to do certain things and dress in certain garments when they made love. She began to wonder if she was not

attractive to him anymore. Frank kept asking his wife to get breast implants, so that she would look like the women in the pictures. At this point she became very self-conscious about her looks, and did not like to even change clothes in front of Frank. He became irritated with her and enjoyed lovemaking with her less and less. She just wasn't as "sexy" as he wanted her to be. He found more pleasure in waiting until his wife had gone to bed (which became earlier and earlier) and sitting in front of the computer with these "beautiful babes" and letting his imagination take over. He enjoyed pleasuring himself rather than taking pleasure in his wife. As the relationship deteriorated, they were barely speaking. As she confided in her friends about what a bum of a husband Frank was, one friend at work kept telling her how beautiful and wonderful she was, and that he'd know how to appreciate a woman like her. I don't need to tell you how that ended. Frank suspected she was having an affair so he turned to the 16-year-old babysitter, because she looked a lot like the porn pictures.

By the time I met Frank, there had been a bitter divorce, fighting each other for custody of the children, and felony charges for aggravated sexual assault of a child (the 16-year-old babysitter). Frank told me that looking at pornography had nothing to do with the problems he had.

How does a person come back from this kind of misery? Understanding how a man conditions his own arousal pattern is the first step. As Frank looked at porn and masturbated to those images, he was conditioning his arousal to more deviant sexual images. Soon *Playboy* just didn't do it for him anymore. He needed more graphic sexual images to masturbate to. As those images became boring he needed something like live images to look at. As this addiction grew it is no wonder that he lost interest in his wife. He became obsessed with finding more graphic images and lost his ability to draw boundaries around what is appropriate

and not appropriate.

Frank's therapy started with getting a clear understanding of how he got where he was. Then he had to make the decision that he didn't want to be there anymore and be willing to make some changes in his behavior. Giving up masturbating was difficult because even without looking at the porn images he had a great collection in his imagination. As he progressed he began to recognize times that he was free of the urge to masturbate. He became more aware of how he objectified women in general. Objectifying women means that you look at them as body parts, rather than as a person. "Wow, great breasts," "Look at that body," and undressing women in your mind is an indication you're objectifying women. I asked Frank to begin to consciously look at women in the face, noting the color of their eyes, and hair. He became more aware of how much he did see women as sexual parts. I'd known Frank about two years when he finally admitted to me that he was the one who destroyed his marriage and he took full responsibility for his other inappropriate behavior. He thanks God for the chance to change his way of thinking and living and often tells people how mighty and powerful the love of God is to forgive and restore him to dignity and integrity.

Psalm 51 tells Frank's story, because it was also King David's story.

Oh loving and kind God, have mercy.

Have pity upon me and take away the awful stain of my transgressions.

Oh wash me; cleanse me from this guilt. Let me be pure again.

For I admit my shameful deed; it haunts me day and night.

It is against you and you alone I sinned, and did this terrible thing.

You saw it all, and your sentence against me is just.

But I was born a sinner, yes from the moment my mother

conceived me.

You deserve honesty from the heart; yes utter sincerity  
and truthfulness,  
Oh give me wisdom.

Sprinkle me with the cleansing blood and I shall be clean  
again,

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

And after you have punished me, give me back my joy again.  
Don't keep looking at my sins—erase them from your sight.  
Create in me a new, clean heart, O God, filled with clean  
thoughts and right desires.

Don't toss me aside, banished forever from your presence.

Don't take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me  
willing to obey you.

Then I will teach your ways to other sinners, and  
they—guilty like me—will repent and return to you.

Don't sentence me to death. Oh my God, you alone can  
rescue me.

Then I will sing of your forgiveness, for my lips will be  
unsealed—oh, how I will praise you.

Psalm 51: v. 1-15

I asked Emily for the bottom line steps to overcoming sex  
addiction:

1. Recognize how you got where you are by examining the  
small but important choices you have made over time.  
(Note: more in-depth information on this step is  
available [here](#) in the Probe Answer to E-mail “Help! I’m  
a Compulsive Masturbator!”)
2. Confess it all as sin and choose to repent by changing  
your behavior. Slam the door on your former behaviors.
3. Stop masturbating, which is a type of substance abuse.  
(The brain chemicals activated by arousal and orgasm are  
a specific chemical substance that can become addictive.  
There is no recovery from substance without giving up

“using.”)

4. Stop objectifying women as sex objects or body parts and train yourself to see them as real people. For example, look them in the eye and note their eye color; note their hair color.

Hope you find this as helpful as I did.

Sue Bohlin

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## **“My Husband Wants to Engage in a Threesome”**

My husband is a Christian and has a good understanding of the Bible. However he has a desire/fantasy to engage in a threesome. I asked him if he believes that is OK with God and he replied yes. He says that the Bible speaks of men being with other men as sinful, however in the days that the Bible was written the men had more than one wife and it is acceptable with God as long as it is acceptable to each person involved. I disagree, but I have no biblical reference to back up my belief. Is the Bible clear about this issue?

Yes, the Bible is clear in teaching against this practice. Your husband is mistaken in stating that the Bible either condones or at least does not prohibit a threesome of one man and two women because some of the leaders of Israel practiced polygamy.

Although the Bible does not have a specific verse that says do not engage in a threesome, there is a long list of Biblical principles that make it clear that such behavior is outside of

God's will for us as His children. The Bible clearly forbids a married man from having sex with a woman who is not his wife; i.e. adultery (Ex 20:14, Mt 5:27), and also forbids sex between two unmarried individuals, i.e. fornication (Acts 15:20, 1 Cor 6:18, 1 Thess 4:3). Jesus' teaching in the New Testament clearly shows that a man who is not rightfully divorced from his first wife and takes on another wife is also committing adultery (Matt 19:3ff).

In the light of the Biblical prohibition against fornication and adultery, a threesome of one man and two women could consist of the following situations:

- None of them are married to each other—fornication (and adultery if one or more of them is married to someone not involved in the threesome);
- The man is married to one of the women and not to the other—he is committing fornication with the other woman and adultery against his wife at the same time; or
- The man is married to both women—according to Jesus' teaching in the NT, he is committing adultery against his first wife.

In all of these cases, the two women are acting in a depraved, unnatural manner toward one another (Rom 1:26)

A sampling of the Biblical principles which apply to this subject are summarized below:

**God's Intention for Marriage:** When God created marriage, He stated the man shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh (Gen 2:24). Note that He does not say the three or more shall become one flesh. God's purpose for marriage has always been a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. This is reaffirmed in Eph 5:31-33 where the marriage relationship is shown to be a picture of Christ's relationship with His one bride, the Church, and the passage

from Genesis is quoted, "the two shall become one flesh." It goes on to say that each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself. Note that each individual has his own *wife* not his own *wives*.

**God's Standard for Adultery:** In interpreting the Bible, Jesus' instruction and interpretation of the Old Testament and any other topic should be our authoritative source. In Matthew 19:3-9, Jesus repeats this principle of becoming one flesh and adds, "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." He then goes on to say that the Law of Moses only allowed for divorce because of the hardness of their heart and that God's full standard is "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." Jesus' teaching on this matter overrides any attempts to use Jacob, David, Solomon, etc. as examples that God supports polygamy. God allowed it in those cases and in every reported case polygamy only led to trouble and heartache.

**NT Standard for Maturity:** The standard for spiritual leadership and maturity in the NT is the husband of one wife. (1 Tim. 3:2,12, Titus 1:6) We don't know if the first century church forced a polygamist who came to Christ to divorce all of his wives, but he could not be a leader in the church, and the objective for believers was clearly marriages of one man and one woman. For additional insight, consider the passage where Paul is discussing marriage in 1 Corinthians 7. In that passage, he notes that a couple is not to withhold sex from one another except for a mutually agreed period for prayer and fasting. Note that he makes no mention of how this should be handled in a polygamous situation, because polygamy was not part of God's plan for marriage.

**Our Body Belongs to the Lord.** In 1 Corinthians 6, the Scripture is very clear about what God thinks of a man engaging in sex with someone other than his wife even when

that sexual act was encouraged by the society in which he lived.

1 Cor 6:15-20 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Is this threesome going to glorify God? Is this something that Jesus wants to honor with His presence?

**Depravity between Women.** Clearly the threesome suggested by your husband includes sexual interaction between two women. Romans 1:26-27 clearly states that this degrading activity is the result of man's depravity and is not God's desire for his beloved children.

**Victory over Sensuality.** The purpose of sex in marriage is not to promote sensuality. The only purpose of a threesome is sensuality. The Bible is clear that sensuality is a deed of the flesh and not a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:19-23). In particular, Ephesians 4:17-24 says that we are no longer to walk in the futility of our mind, giving ourselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness, but we are to put on our new self that has been created in righteousness.

I could go on and on with other passages that clearly teach against such practices. The only way to argue that the Bible supports such activity is to deceive oneself as to the nature



of the activity and the clear teaching of Scripture.

I would like to end by encouraging your husband to consider his fantasy in the light of the following verses:

*1 Peter 3:7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.* How does introducing another woman into the special intimacy you share with your wife show her honor? How does it show that you are living with her in an understanding way? The suggestion that her intimacy is not enough dishonors and degrades her dignity as a fellow heir of God's grace as it would any other woman involved in such a relationship.

*Rom 13:13-14 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.* Seeking to go beyond the marriage relationship is making provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. Our lusts are great at tricking us into rationalizing foolish behavior that is going to damage ourselves and others. When we start making provision for them, we are moving ourselves outside of Christ's protection. We can be sure that Jesus Christ is intensely interested in your relationship with your wife and has NO interest in participating in a sexual threesome.

Even if the Bible was silent on the topic (which it clearly is not), 1 Cor 8 & 9 and Rom 14 would prevent you from pursuing it further in the light of your wife's feelings about the subject.

Understand that the reason God puts limits on our sensuality and promiscuity is not to deprive us of greater satisfaction in life. Just as we do with our own children, He puts those

limits in place to protect us from harming ourselves and others. Please recognize this fantasy for what it is—a deceitful lust which needs to be taken captive in obedience to Christ (2 Cor 10:4-5). Don't feel ashamed for being under attack by lust (it is a common position to find ourselves in), and be sure and ask God for His way to escape from this deceit (1 Cor 10:13). Turning his back on this fantasy will lead to joy and satisfaction, whereas continuing to pursue it will lead to continual craving and heartache.

\_\_\_\_\_, if your husband is unwilling to consider the evidence presented above, you should seek competent, Christian counseling as a couple. In addition, I can recommend some good resource materials to better understand God's purpose for marriage and how you can grow as a couple. Here is a sampling of resources:

- ***The Marriage Masterpiece*** by Al Jansenn—a comprehensive look at God's purposes for marriage
- ***Marriage Without Regrets***—a comprehensive inductive Bible study from Precept Ministries
- ***Sex According to God*** by Kay Arthur—what does the Bible teach about sex?
- ***A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage*** by S. Stanley, et.al.—identifying and removing destructive behavior patterns
- ***When Bad Things Happen to Good Marriages***, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott

I am praying that God will speak to you and your husband leading you into the joy of being one in Him.

Yours in Christ,

Steve Cable

# **“What Do You Say to Someone Who’s Had Sex-Change Surgery?”**

I have heard of a man who has undergone a surgery to change his sexuality to female. After two years, “she” is married to another man.

What are the biblical references on sex-change surgery? How do we counsel if we meet someone like this? Furthermore, in an interview with this man, he said that inside him is a woman who is trapped in a man’s body. Please help me understand this issue.

This is a difficult situation since the developments of technology have made it possible to carry through on self-deception in ways the world has never seen before.

There is nothing in the Bible about sex reassignment surgery, but everything the Bible says about male and female pertains to those who are confused about their gender. The most important principle is that God chooses whether a child is boy or girl, and our bodies tell us what gender God intends for us. If someone feels that their gender is mismatched to their genitals, then the solution is not to mutilate one’s body, but to cooperate with God to change one’s confused thinking.

“I am a woman trapped in a man’s body” is a familiar statement made by a gender-confused person, but it’s not accurate. The feelings are real, but the interpretation of the feelings are

faulty. Several years ago, here in the U.S., Johns Hopkins University stopped doing sex-change surgeries because they learned that several years after the surgery, people weren't happy. That's because having a doctor change the outside, did nothing to change the heart, and the wrong thinking continued. Here is a link to a powerful essay written by the doctor who made the decision to shut down the program: [www.firstthings.com/article/2004/11/surgical-sex](http://www.firstthings.com/article/2004/11/surgical-sex)

Also, here is a website that I think you will find helpful in understanding the regret many people experience post-surgery: [www.sexchangeregret.com](http://www.sexchangeregret.com)

How do you counsel someone? Well, it depends on what they think. A person who is happy with their sex-change probably isn't going to be interested in talking to someone who thinks differently about it. If they're not happy, and suspect they made a colossal mistake, then I would suggest pointing them to the grace and mercy of God. Sometimes we make decisions we can't fix, and the only solution for a regret-filled person is to invite God into the mess they've made and ask Him to bring glory to Himself through it. God can make all things work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). He honors our choices, though, and a person who has chosen to mutilate their body will have to live with a mutilated body. But one can do it to the glory of God. The good news for the person who has trusted in Christ is that when they receive their new, glorified body in heaven (1 Corinthians 15), their original gender will be restored.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

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# “What’s Wrong with Masturbation, Anyway?”

What’s all the fuss about masturbation? It seems to me that Christians have decided it’s wrong and then go looking for Bible verses to back up their prejudice. The Bible doesn’t even mention it! It’s a legitimate way to get sexual release. Besides, I can’t stop it for any length of time, so it must be okay.

I asked Mike Cleveland, a friend in ministry at [Setting Captives Free](#), for his insight on this issue. As an overcomer in pornography and masturbation, Mike has what I believe is an excellent perspective on a biblical answer to this question. With a background in theology and practical ministry, plus the testimonies of thousands of people he has helped gain freedom from bondage to these sins, Mike is well-equipped to answer the question of why masturbation is wrong.

Be sure to read the powerful testimonies at the end. They also answer the question, “What’s wrong with masturbation?”

Sue Bohlin

Friend,

There is an untruth floating around Christian circles that masturbation is not a sin and that it is acceptable under certain circumstances. Some believe that masturbation is acceptable:

- For single people
- For married people who have to endure prolonged absences

from their spouse

- As a preventative to the commitment of sexual crimes

One of the course members from the Pure Freedom Course [note: a free, Christ-centered online course to help people overcome an addiction to pornography and masturbation at [www.settingcaptivesfree.com](http://www.settingcaptivesfree.com)] recently sent us an article written by a pastor on the subject of masturbation. In his article, this pastor unhesitatingly recommended masturbation for people of all ages to “release stress for singles,” to “relieve pressure when away from a spouse,” and to “prevent sex crimes.” He also gave instructions on how to teach masturbation to young children and blatantly stated that God gave masturbation to us as a way “to enjoy sex before marriage.”

I wish this pastor could see some of the enrollments we receive from people who have become enslaved to gratifying their flesh by the act of masturbation—many without pornography! They are slaves to their own lusts; unable to break free from this debilitating habit that has crippled their walk with the Lord. Because they are unable to stop this behavior, they are guilty and some feel ashamed and frustrated. They have “low self-esteem” and have difficulty interacting in social situations because they know they have a secret—a dark secret that they are slaves to fondling themselves, caressing themselves, and to orgasm. Moreover, I wish this pastor could watch as God sets these captives free from masturbation and read their emails stating how depression, paranoia, stress...etc. disappeared when God set them free from masturbation and sexual impurity of all kinds.

Some Christians believe that because masturbation is not specifically mentioned in the Bible that God does not consider the presence or the absence of the activity important. But is this really accurate? Is God truly silent about masturbation? Is the absence of the word “masturbation” in Scripture God's way of giving His approval to men and women gratifying their

flesh in masturbation? Remember, the word “pornography” itself is not in the Bible (though the root word is), but there are biblical principles dealing with both pornography and masturbation.

Though it is true that the Bible does not use the word “masturbation,” I do not believe that Scripture has left us in the dark about whether masturbation is right or wrong. Masturbation is not a “gift of God” for single people and it is not a “preventative for sexual crimes.” It is indulging the flesh, which leads to sin-slavery (John 8:34). Masturbation makes us begin to live according to the dictates of the flesh and to become slaves to the “misdeeds of the body.” Scripture warns us about this kind of activity, “For if you live according to the flesh (by giving in to its desires), you will die” and tells us how to stop, “but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13).

In reality, masturbation is a high expression of loving self and of sexual self-idolatry. It is deceiving and enslaving. Let us see these truths from Scripture:

“Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness” (Romans 6:19-20).

This verse teaches that “offering leads to slavery.” When we “offer the parts of our body” to sin we become a slave to sin. Masturbation only “relieves the pressure” temporarily. The pressure will soon be back and masturbation will need to occur again and again, and again. But if we offer the parts of our body for righteousness, we will become slaves of righteousness. So, present your body a living sacrifice; offer the parts of your body to God and your slavery to Christ will produce complete freedom from masturbation.

Another argument that some make in favor of masturbation is to say that it is much like eating food: if we indulge ourselves we can become slaves, but what we need to do is learn to control our appetite, not stop eating. So, in the same way, we need to control masturbation and not become slaves to it, but it is not sin to masturbate anymore than it is sin to eat. But there is a major problem with this argument: eating is a biological necessity. If we don't eat, we die. Sex is a biological desire, not a necessity. Many people live their whole lives without ever having sex.

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires" (Romans 8:5).

Masturbation fixes the mind on the desires of the flesh, and burns the image of nudity and sex into the mind. With each occurrence of masturbation, that image becomes clearer and more intense, and can become a tool of the devil to set up a thought-stronghold (2 Corinthians 3:1-5).

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8)

Here is the real problem of masturbation, and let me say this clearly: If you are masturbating, you are pleasing only yourself. Your actions are displeasing to God because you are "in the flesh" and a slave to lust. You are offering the members of your body in slavery to impurity and your mind is set on what the flesh desires.

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want"(Galatians 5:16-17).

Why is masturbation a sin? It is a sin because when we



masturbate we “gratify the desires of the flesh,” which we would not do if we were walking in and living by the Spirit. Let us make this point clear. If we are walking in the Spirit and living by faith, we will not masturbate.

“So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23).

Masturbation is a sin because it does not come from faith. I cannot believe the promises of God to supply my every need (Phil. 4:19), to make a way out of every temptation (Hebrews 10:13), to keep me from falling (Jude 24), and masturbate at the same time. Masturbation is not of faith therefore it is sin.

About Jesus Christ, God the Father says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And why? Because He lived a life of obedience unto death, even death on a cross. And we are unworthy to be called His disciples unless we daily take up the cross and follow Him. Taking up our cross means crucifying our flesh, not gratifying it. It means dying to self, not living to please the flesh. Oh, how we need the teaching of the cross of Jesus Christ in these instances.

The cross shows us One Whose flesh was crucified, not controlled. The cross shows us that we are not to “relieve the pressure” but endure to the point of shedding blood. Stating that masturbation is acceptable “under certain circumstances” is a denial of the cross of Jesus Christ. And the truth of the matter is that it is so much easier to totally crucify than to attempt to control.

Right here let me quote from an excellent book from Pure Life Ministries on the subject of masturbation called *Tearing Down*

*The Walls Of Sexual Idolatry* by Steve Gallagher. This book is highly recommended for its commitment to the truth of Scripture, rather than to worldly principles. In fact, Pure Life Ministries considers their ministry to be “an alternative to psychology.” They say, “Some of the leading Christian psychologists in the nation have said that masturbation is a normal function and unless carried on into marriage, usually proves to be harmless. I believe the reason that they have said this is to alleviate some of the guilt and condemnation associated with it. But you cannot condone something because it makes people feel guilty. It may be normal for fallen man, but that does not make it acceptable in the eyes of a holy God. Although masturbation is not specifically addressed in Scripture, the Bible gives us principles for leading a pure and holy life that clearly tells us that it is wrong.

- **Proper Sex**—The first and most obvious reason that masturbation is wrong is because it goes against God’s purpose for sex. Although our society has perverted sex to the extent that it has become a self-centered act, God created it to be a function of marriage. There is no room for sex outside of marriage! Worldly-minded teachers tell us though, that we have pent-up desires that must be ‘relieved.’ They say that God created us to need sex and would not expect us to go without it. What they do not realize is that sex is a desire that God gave us; not a need. People that have learned to walk in the Spirit have been overcoming these desires for thousands of years.

- **Feeding The Flesh**—Another reason why masturbation is wrong is because it is another form of self-gratification. Throughout Scripture, self-gratification is denounced.

- **Lustful Fantasy**—It is virtually impossible to masturbate without fantasizing. What would a person think about who is trying to achieve orgasm if not sex with some person? Paul admonishes us about our thinking when he says, ‘Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is

right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things’ (Philippians 4:8-9).

- **Doorway To Other Sin**—The last reason that masturbation is wrong is that it opens the door for the enemy to lead the person deeper into sin. . . .[S]in is never satisfied. It always demands more and more of the person. As God told Cain, ‘Sin is crouching at the door, and its desire is for you, but you must master it.’”

So, let us get practical on this subject. Many of us have children coming into puberty and we know they will masturbate. How do we converse with them on this topic? First, let us instruct them about the cross. I tell my son that Jesus Christ laid down His life for us, and He requires us to lay down our lives also. He presented His body as an offering to the Father and we can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, offer our bodies a living sacrifice. We talk about Jesus refusing to gratify His flesh when tempted by the devil, and that His flesh was nailed to a cross. In the same way we should count ourselves dead to sin. I talk plainly with him about the enslavement that masturbation will bring, if he were to offer the members of his body for sin. I tell him that the desires he has are given by God to experience pleasure in marriage, and to procreate, not for selfish reasons. He understands that to follow Christ masturbation is not an option. It makes it so much easier on him, when the temptation comes, to not even consider it as a possibility, rather than try to decide if this is a time it must be “controlled” or if can he give in to the desire.

Finally, let me finish with a testimony we received awhile back. It is from a gentleman in his last week of the Pure Freedom Course and he is now set free from slavery to masturbation. He writes this testimony:

“My problems began when our youth pastor told me that the

Bible does not mention masturbation, therefore God must not condemn it. He told us that as long as we were masturbating with thoughts of our future spouse then we were not sinning. My masturbation began slowly—only using it once a week or so. I felt guilty, like I was giving in to sin rather than denying the flesh, but my pastor said it was a helpful tool, and that it even prevented sex crimes when used correctly. Gullible as I was I believed him. I soon began discovering that offering the parts of my body to masturbation did not permanently decrease desire or relieve pressure—quite the opposite—the more I masturbated the more I enjoyed it and the more I engaged in it. I honestly do not know what happened—one day I had just finished masturbating along side a farm road, for the third time that day, when it dawned on me that I was a slave to masturbation. What started innocently, and with the full approval of a religious authority, trapped me into a vice that completely choked out all spiritual life in me. “Oh how I wish that pastor had preached the Word correctly, even if it would have made him less popular. I wish he had explained to me that unless I denied myself (not indulged myself) and took up my cross daily I would not be worthy to be His disciple. I wish he had told me about the principle of slavery—that we are slaves to whatever we offer ourselves to. I wish he had told me, plain and simple, that it is so much easier to totally and completely refuse masturbation—that it is not even an option for a Christian—than to attempt to “control it” and “only use it under certain circumstances.” If only he had not used that worn-out phrase “the Bible doesn’t mention it” and instead taught the principles of Scripture. I am not blaming him; my own deceptive heart loved hearing what he preached, and I am responsible for my own actions. I just wish I would have had a man of God who could have helped me learn to deny and crucify rather than rationalize and justify.”

Another enrollment in The Freedom Course came in right as we

were finishing this article. This 17-year-old young man writes:

“Every time I get the urge I can’t resist masturbation...I have tried to fight it for many years, and, although I have had a few temporary victories, I never completely defeated it. I desire to live all of my life for Christ, and this can’t be done until I defeat this fiend. I also want to remain pure for my future wife, and if I continue down this path I know that wish will not become true.”

Masturbation is a doorway to slavery! May God grant this young man freedom in Christ.

May God give us all grace to choose to please the Lord by offering our bodies a living sacrifice rather than pleasing ourselves through masturbation.

Grace,

Mike Cleveland

[www.settingcaptivesfree.com](http://www.settingcaptivesfree.com)

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## **“I’m a Compulsive Masturbator!”**

I hate it that I am overpowered by an addiction to porn and compulsive masturbation. I don’t understand why I just can’t stop it. I really loathe that part of myself. It disgusts me. Can you help?

You and millions of other people, millions MORE now that the internet has invaded our lives!

I serve on the board of [Living Hope Ministries](#), a Christ-centered outreach to those wanting to leave homosexuality. I asked Ricky Chelette, a pastor of First Baptist Church of Arlington (TX) and Executive Director of Living Hope, to share his highly understandable explanation of what happens in an addictive cycle, in a way that has also helped many people dealing with their various besetting sins. He graciously gave me permission to offer his material to answer your question. I hope it helps.

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

## Understanding The Cycle of Sin

This is the cycle of sin that I often share with folks that meet with me. Though I designed this visual image for overcomers with same gender attraction (SGA), I have used it with my single adult group as a whole, for I feel the concepts are universal though the vehicles we use to accomplish our end result might be somewhat different.

Take a look at this diagram.



Hunger or poor Health  
A ngry  
L onely  
T ired  
S tressed  
D epressed

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You begin the cycle of sin at the bottom of the page where you see the letters and blank lines.

Though many of you think that what triggers you is the sight of a good looking man/woman, I think something much deeper is taking place. Most of our triggers fall into one of these broad categories:

- **Health**

I am talking about bad health. When you are sick you are open to temptation.

- **Hunger**

When we are hungry we can feel temptation.

- **Angry**

- **Lonely**

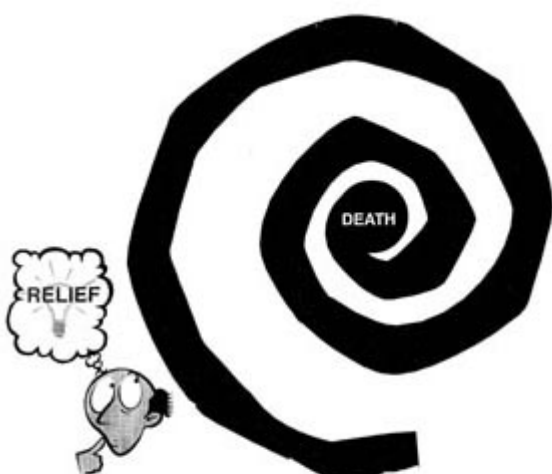
Need I say more...

- **Tired**

- **Stressed**

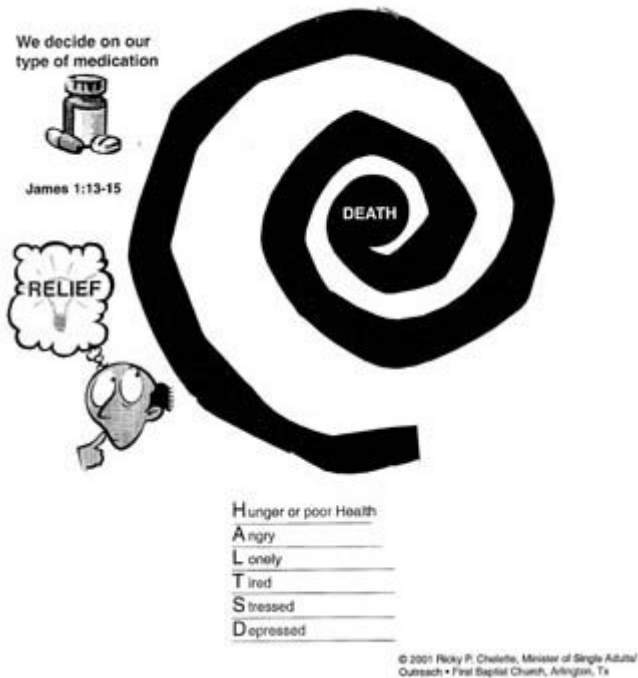
- **Depressed**

Whenever we feel one of these feelings or something closely related to one or more of them, we have the thought of RELIEF. We all want relief from the pain, hurt and stresses of our lives.



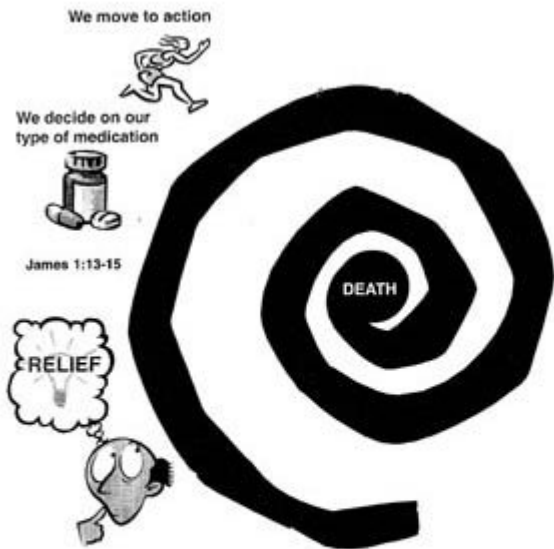
Hunger or poor Health  
A ngry  
L onely  
T ired  
S tressed  
D epressed

The way that we find relief is to seek some form of medication. This does not have to be actual medication, though it can be and this is how people get addicted to drugs, but it is medication all the same. It is something that causes us to experience pleasure and relief.



So we move from the bottom of the diagram to the thought for relief (the man and the bubble) to the thought of what we will do to medicate our pain and find relief (bottle of pills). When we decide to medicate our pain we go through some action (the runner) before we actually get to the medication.



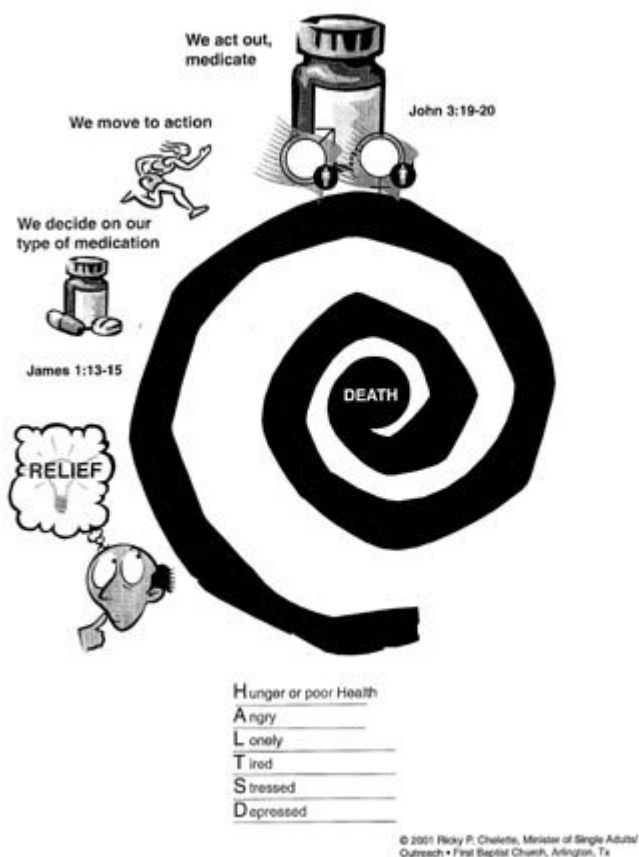


- Hunger or poor Health \_\_\_\_\_
- Angry \_\_\_\_\_
- Lonely \_\_\_\_\_
- Tired \_\_\_\_\_
- Stressed \_\_\_\_\_
- Depressed \_\_\_\_\_

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Oddly enough, even the action toward the intended medication, is somewhat medicinal itself. For example: If you are going to do the big M (masturbation) for your medication you might get undressed and lay in bed, or jump in a warm shower. If you are going to cruise P (internet Porn) on the internet you might get into something more comfortable and begin the search process. If you are going to act out with another or “cruise,” you might get cleaned up and put on some alluring clothing or other articles that would give clues to your intent. Basically, you go through some sort of ritual of preparation. It just doesn’t “happen.” However, we have done this ritual so many times that it feels quite automatic—we may not even realize that we are doing it. It is at this stage that most people tell me that they feel as though they really can’t help themselves—“it is like another person has taken over my body and I am just on autopilot.” In many ways, they really are. I am convinced that once you move from thought to action, it is very difficult if not nearly impossible to stop the ultimate medication/action from taking place. Yes, of course God could intervene, but He has created us with free will and He rarely interferes with our willful decisions. During this phase of the cycle you are also likely to be producing

adrenalin; a very strong chemical that makes a person's heart rate increase, increases their blood pressure, and gives them a sense of invincibility.

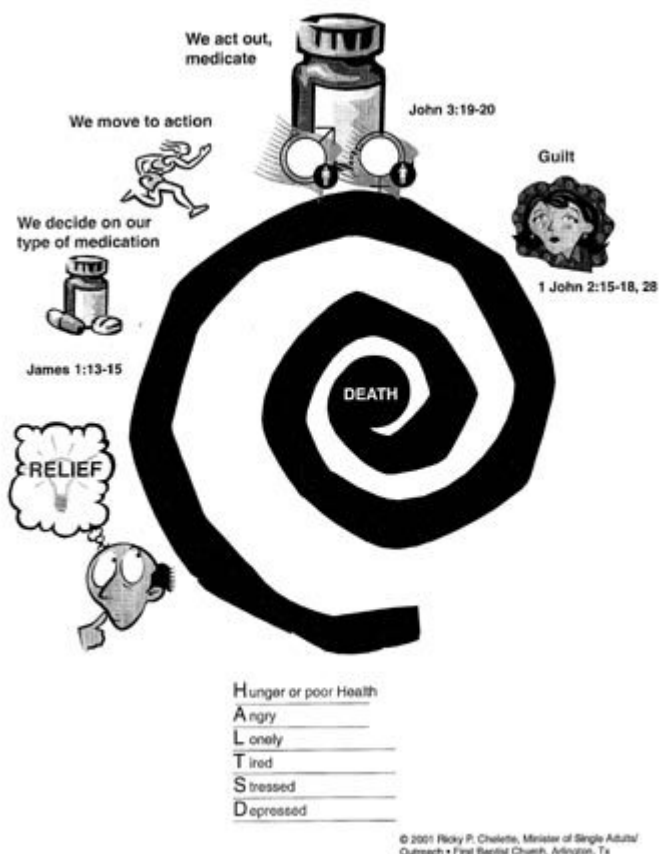


Finally, you carry out your medicative fix by doing the big M or having sex and achieving an orgasm in some way. When you do this, your brain produces a chemical called endorphin. This chemical is extremely strong, some say even ten times stronger than cocaine.

Every time you achieve an orgasm or act out in some way to achieve your medication, endorphins are produced and your body responds in a very predictable way. This is why you get that feeling of pleasure, euphoria, or peace when you orgasm (medicate). There are actually chemicals being produced in your brain that make you feel good. The preparation for the orgasm also can produce these chemicals (remember Pavlov's salivating dogs?!) but not in the same quantity or intensity as the orgasm itself. (Now you are at the top of our diagram—medicine bottle)

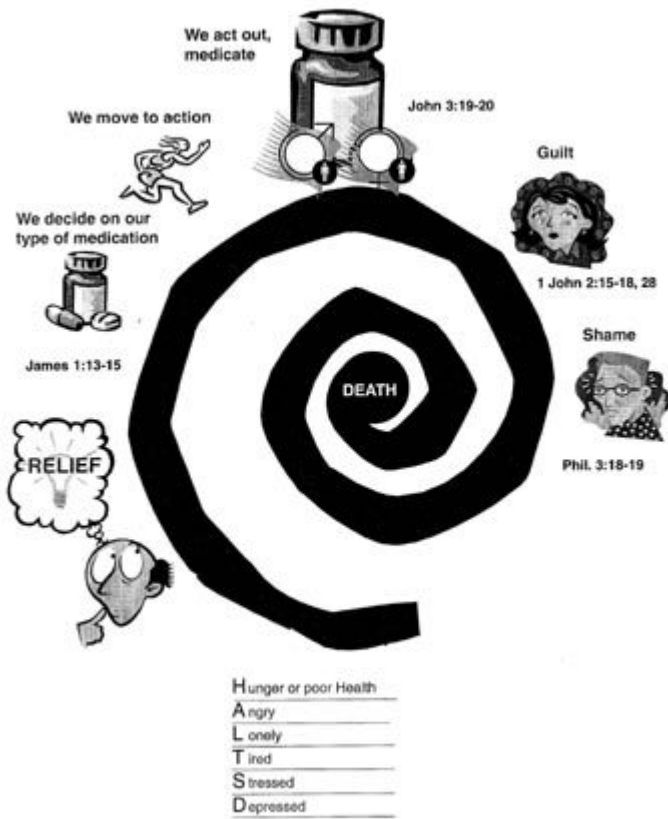
I want you to think of your brain as a CD. Each time endorphins are produced, you burn another track on that CD. If you keep playing the same tune (producing the same chemical) over a period of months/years, you burn a rut in your CD and it is very, VERY difficult to get out of that rut. It is a universal, psychologically proven fact. We establish pathways in our brain that demand that we do certain things and get our fix. Thus, we continue to the cycle of medicating our hurts. .

However, like every high, it is followed by an equally powerful low. The low begins as the chemicals in our brain are absorbed and assimilated into our bodies. We first begin to feel guilty (the lady that is crying on the diagram).



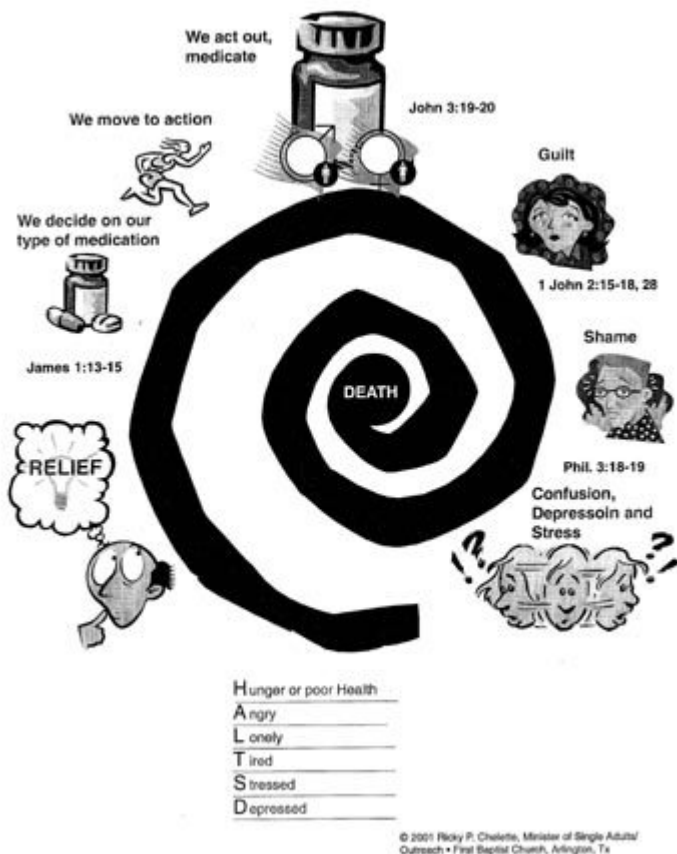
I believe that guilt and conviction are really good things. I see them as a way that the Spirit of God brings correction and discipline to our lives. However, many times we feel guilt, but we don't confess and repent. We simply feel guilty. We do this because we think that God will not hear our prayers. .

.again, for the thing that we seem to keep doing over and over. As a result, not too long after we feel guilt, Satan comes in and uses our sense of guilt to make us feel shame (the man that looks perplexed).



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Shame, I believe, is of the devil. The difference between guilt and shame is that guilt is over our actions—things we do. Shame is feeling bad about who we are—our sense of self. Shame causes us to review the lies of Satan and our old tapes that tell us that, “I am worthless. God doesn’t really love me. I am a loser. No one will ever love me. I will never be rid of this sin. I am gay. Etc., etc.”



These self-loathing statements do nothing but drag us further down the cycle so that we become confused, stressed, angry, lonely, etc. (the confused triple-headed person). And where does that lead us?

Back at the beginning of the cycle to keep repeating our sin again and again..

You should also notice that this spiral makes an inward progression that ends at a black hole. You see, what happens with our desire to medicate is that each time we do it, it takes a bit more stimulation to get us to the place that we have the same medicative results. We constantly need more. That is why the spiral is a spiral and not just a circle. It draws us in, deeper and deeper, until we reach the black hole—DEATH. James 1 says when sin is complete it will bring forth death: spiritual death, emotional death, and even physical death. The process is gradual most of the time, but it is guaranteed.

Take for example the person who starts out just looking at a

“Men’s Health” magazine. Nothing wrong with that really. But there are some buff men that have their shirts off. They get excited about that, do a little lusting and masturbate and then they decide to find some porn on the internet. At first it is “mild porn” and then they have a need to find more explicitly sexual pornography, etc. Before you know it that is not enough for them and they search for chat rooms. They start chatting dirty and eventually they decide to call and talk with someone. They won’t meet. At least not this time.... But sooner or later chatting is not enough and they meet... and they have sex... and you know the rest of the story....



Our desire to medicate will take us further and further down this path of destruction. The results are guaranteed, but so is its destructive end.

# So how do we break the cycle of sin in our lives?

I really think that there is only one opportunity for us to break the cycle. I think that we have to learn how to cope effectively and Biblically with our triggers.

If, when we realize that we are experiencing a trigger, we want relief (which we all do naturally) this is OK. However, this is where the discipline comes in. When we want relief we have to move from seeking to medicate our pain with acting out, to taking that need to medicate to the One who is the Great Physician—God. We have to go to Him, at this early stage, and tell Him what we are experiencing; what is going on with us; and ask Him for help. We have to do what 2 Cor. 10:5b says, “Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” Every thought... not just some, but especially those that seek relief.

If we do this, we are able to kick ourselves out of the cycle of sin and find victory and freedom in Christ.

Is it that easy? Absolutely not. It is hard work. Many of you have not yet learned how to identify the triggers and that will be your first step. But with God’s help, it is doable.

Now, don’t think that this is just a struggler thing. It is not.

Here’s another example from my wife who does not struggle with SGA issues at all (thank God!). She is a nurse in ICU; a very stressful job. She is also a self-proclaimed chocoholic (any ladies relate to this?). Many times, when things are going bad at work (stress trigger), she says she can “hear” the candy machine calling her name (need for relief). She puts things in order with her patients (action/ritual) and sneaks out to the machine (more action) and eats a candy bar (medication). After she eats it she gets an insulin rush (sugar high) which makes

her feel all euphoric and wonderful only to be followed by a sugar low which makes her feel guilty and convicted because she knows that she shouldn't handle stress by eating. She then can easily slip into a shame cycle of self-loathing thinking that she is too fat (which she is not), out of control, etc. and the cycle begins again. [She told me I could share this as this diagram has helped her understand you and herself better.]

The same could be said of people who shop when they are triggered, spend money, drink coffee, become violent, use drugs or alcohol, etc. Same triggers, different courses of medication, different chemicals produced (sometimes), but all ending in the same results.

Well, I hope this makes some sense to you and is helpful to you in visualizing and getting a handle on what is taking place in your life. I would really encourage you to memorize the 2 Cor. 10:5b passage and the James 1:13-15 passage as these can help you in directing your thinking when you begin to think "RELIEF"—it will point you to Christ rather than to medication.

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## **“Why Doesn't the Bible Specifically Condemn Father-Daughter Incest?”**

In [“How Can a Just God Order the Slaughter of Men, Women and Children?”](#) your author quoted the Bible as saying incest with someone's daughter was forbidden. I have Revised Standard Edition of the Bible, and I have noticed that in this version, at least, it says “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your



son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, for their nakedness is your nakedness."

Out of this whole long list of people (relatives) one is not supposed to have sexual relations with, in Leviticus 18, only the daughter is omitted. I have always wondered about this. You could say, well, it's inferred that someone should not commit incest with one's daughter. But why list all the other relatives one by one, and leave out the daughter??? It seems very suspect that the author of Leviticus would make a very detailed, explicit list, and yet still leave out the daughter.

As an incest survivor, this bothers me greatly that even one version of the Bible would have this translation.

My heart hurts for you. I am so sorry to hear about your sexual abuse. Did you know that the Hebrew word for incest is "confusion"? Appropriate, isn't it?

You're right, there isn't a specific prohibition against father-daughter incest in the Bible, although I do believe it is covered under Lev. 18:6, "None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness; I am the LORD."

I found this interesting statement on a website ([www.arlev.clara.net/lev038.htm](http://www.arlev.clara.net/lev038.htm)):

### ***Father and Daughter***

*It needs to be noted that sexual relations between a father and his daughter aren't mentioned as being forbidden in either this passage or chapter 20 which follows. This is a tricky problem but it seems best to follow Wenham's explanation on this in seeing this prohibition as already in existence amongst the Israelites and so not repeated here.*

*The implication of Genesis 19:30-38 appears to be that such a union was unacceptable in the eyes of the natural culture of the tribes and didn't warrant a comment forbidding what was*

*already accepted as illicit.*

*Wenham notes (page 254) that:*

*It is expressly forbidden both in the laws of Hammurabi . . . and in the Hittite laws . . . In other words these regulations extend the prohibitions on incest already accepted in other parts of the ancient Near East*

Since even the Gentiles knew that incest with one's daughter was unthinkable, perhaps that's why the umbrella prohibition of Lev. 18:6 was understood to include one's own daughter.

I also checked with a great friend of Probe, Dr. Reg Grant (professor at Dallas Theological Seminary), who also added this:

*I went to the [NET Bible](#) and found this little note on 18:6 (which is the place I would have taken her as well):*

*Heb "Man, man shall not draw near to any flesh of his body/flesh." The repetition of the word man is distributive, meaning "any" [or, "every"] man (GKC 123.c; cf. Lev 15:2). The two words for flesh are combined to emphasize the physical familial relatedness (see Hartley, Leviticus [WBC], 282 and Levine, Leviticus [JPSTC], 119).*

It's interesting to me to see the emphasis of the Hebrew in Lev. 18:6: first, literally, "no man, man," indicating that this is across the board for EVERYONE, and secondly, the repetition of both Hebrew words for "flesh" (literally, "flesh of flesh to him") to cover every family relationship.

I hope the fact that the unspeakable horror of father-child incest is not specifically forbidden in Scripture does not make you feel that it is any less heart-breaking to God than it is. There are no words for the depth of my compassion for anyone who has to live with the soul-wounds of this horrible

sin and trauma. Again, I am so sorry.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

P.S. A reader sent an email responding to this article, suggesting that the prohibition in Lev. 18:17 (“You shall not uncover the nakedness **of a woman and her daughter**; you shall not take [in marriage] her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter, to uncover her nakedness they are close relatives, it is evil counsel”) also works to include daughters and step-daughters.

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## **“Are Nocturnal Emissions (Wet Dreams) Sinful?”**

I have question about nocturnal emissions or wet dreams. As a Christian seeking to to be released from sexual temptation, your writings have helped me center my thoughts on truth and gain victory over my temptations through the power of Christ’s blood. Despite these victories, and perhaps in spite of them, I am being plagued by nocturnal emissions.

Six months ago I gave my homosexuality over to Christ and am no longer living as a gay man. I have, however, struggled with the temptation to masturbate. It took me a while to recognize masturbation as sexually immoral. So I am no longer masturbating either.

At this point I began having frequent nocturnal emissions. It is somewhat embarrassing because it usually seems to be a problem that adolescents have; I am 22.

There have been some noticeable differences in how my nocturnal emissions are occurring now than in the past. The biggest difference is that my dreams are often not sexual in content, whereas in the past they usually were.

Scripture surprisingly seems to mention this more directly than masturbation, or at least in the Old Testament. It tells us that it is unclean, but compared to the verbiage used to describe homosexuality, it would seem it is not as bad. Is it wrong, though? Am I sinning, and if so, how do I keep from sinning when I am asleep? Do you think that they could be caused by spiritual attacks, or is it simply my body wanting to relieve tensions? I am truly concerned and very confused about this.

Thank you for a most open and encouraging email. You have made some tremendous strides forward in His grace that are humbling to read for one who has not struggled with the intensity you report.

To answer your major question, nocturnal emissions are universally understood to be a normal bodily response to accumulated semen. You never really stop producing semen and when you are not providing an outlet either through sexual intercourse or masturbation your body must expel the excess. I find it quite interesting that the content of your dreams associated with the emissions have changed as you have responded in obedience. What an incredible confirmation that God is honored by your choices. It should also be of interest to you that God has provided a moral release of these fluids apart from sexual activity. God has provided for abstinence and obedience!

Concerning the uncleanness issue, remember that a woman's menstrual period was also considered a time of uncleanness in the Law of Moses. It is still normal and not sin, just unclean. Part of the reason for ceremonial uncleanness in the Old Testament was for simple hygienic reasons that early

Israel would not fully understand so God gave laws for them to abide by.

In regard to their frequency, though I am not a medical doctor, I would expect for the frequency of emissions to diminish over time as your body adjusts to your abstinent choices. Our bodies are quite flexible and will adjust to most changes we institute. For instance, as you eat less, your stomach will eventually shrink a bit and it actually takes less to fill you up. As you begin to eat more, your stomach can begin to expand to accommodate the larger volume. So too with nocturnal emissions. I suspect that as your "demand" is reduced, production of semen will eventually slow down though never cease altogether.

Therefore I would not consider your emissions as sinful at all, just a natural bodily response to your current obedient choices. Be assured brother, you are not in sin! Not in the least! This is actual confirmation of correct choices. I rejoice with you and pray your unnecessary guilt will melt away.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD  
Probe Ministries

*Addendum by Sue Bohlin, August 2010*

Recently I had the privilege of speaking to a group of young people at a conference about unwanted homosexuality. In a breakout session dealing with replacing the lies we believe with the truth from God's word and God's world, I was addressing the lie "I can't live without sex," replacing it with the truth that sex is not a basic requirement like food, water and sleep. I supported my argument with the verse from Psalm 139 that says we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," explaining how nocturnal emissions are God's design for expelling the buildup of seminal fluid.

One young man told us a fascinating story:

“I had never experienced a wet dream. I was reading one of the discussion threads on the Living Hope Youth Forum ([www.livehope.org](http://www.livehope.org)) about the ‘6 Week Challenge.’ That’s where people challenge each other to go six weeks without masturbating. [The original poster wrote, “The hope is that by abstaining for this period of time, we can break the cycle of continually running back to P & M (pornography and masturbation) as “medications” for our problems and struggles, and instead learn to run to Jesus and other healthy replacements.’]”

“I decided to take the six-week challenge. After I reached six weeks, I kept going. After no sexual activity for eight months, one night I had an incredibly intense dream. I was in the throne room of God. There was glory and beauty and light everywhere. Suddenly I realized God was showering me with such delight and favor. Somehow in the dream He was letting me know that He loves me, He delights in me and He’s proud of me. I had this amazing sense of incredible joy that exploded inside me. Then I woke up, and I realized I’d had a wet dream.”

One of the other students said, “Dude, are you kidding me? You’re saying that your wet dream was connected to this spiritual dream that God was, like, *proud* of you?”

He replied, “Yeah, that’s exactly what I’m saying.”

I thought that was *most* interesting.

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## “Help! My Husband’s Addicted

# to Porn!”

I am in a dilemma. I have been married for nineteen years. We have two beautiful children and what I thought was a ‘picture perfect’ marriage. Although I would have liked to make love more often, my husband never seemed interested – so I assumed he had a low level of sexual desire.

Recently I discovered to my horror that my husband has been masturbating to hard-core pornography. When I approached him about it, he was very angry at first, saying that “All husbands have secrets from their wives”, but then he was extremely sorry and promised that he would never touch himself again. He also stated his undying love for me and the family arrangement and I truly believed and forgave him. I was and still am deeply hurt because I also discovered that he has been doing this habitually almost every day for the duration of our marriage, waiting for me to leave the house before he “indulges.” We had a good discussion where he broke down and cried and said that life was not worth living without me in it. I slowly tried to pick up the pieces and began to think that, because he was coming to me for sex more regularly, that things had changed for the better. A few days ago, while doing the laundry, I discovered a semen stain on his underwear.

I approached my husband but he profusely denied it, saying that it was a “urine dribble stain.” I certainly know the difference! He then became extremely angry, stating that I was dredging up the past. He called me awful names for being so possessive. He also squeezed my arm so hard that it had bruises on it (something that has happened before). Once again, he eventually broke down crying saying that he loved me and that he felt like crashing his car into a tree. Please help me, because, other than all of this he IS a good man. He gives me flowers and gifts all the time, he constantly tells me that I am beautiful and he says “I love you” every single day. He shows great attentiveness when we do make love and I

truly enjoy being with him; he is a hard worker, a positive thinker and an emotional being who can show great depths of compassion and humility. He has done so much for so many people, including me and our children – but I am having trouble dealing with this “other side.” It is killing me to think that he chooses to masturbate as soon as I leave the house – after having spent the entire day together. I am frightened of his blackmailing me to stay – because I honestly think that he WOULD kill himself if I left him. Other than this, our sex life together (when it happens) is wonderful and we spend a lot of quality time together as a family.

He will not attend counselling sessions, as he is in denial as to how hurt and shattered I am. I feel my whole married life has been based on betrayal. I now do not trust or respect my husband anymore and although I will always love him from the depths of my heart, I no longer find that I am in love with him. Please help me.

Bless your heart! I am so sorry for the horrible pain you're in!

I asked our good friend Henry Rogers, author of *The Silent War: Ministering to Those Trapped in the Deception of Pornography*, for help in answering your question. Here's his answer:

*I'm convinced this man has been a habitual masturbator (is that a word?) since childhood. I suspect he battled with guilt during his teen years and yet the guilt gets stronger after marriage. The reason is simple. It's after men are married that they finally realize how selfish masturbation is. Sex between a husband and a wife is giving yourself completely to your spouse. Masturbation is giving nothing. What a contrast between the two which causes feelings of guilt.*

*Married men involved in habitual masturbation feel guilty*



because they have wives, yet at times they prefer masturbation. Masturbation can take a man into a fantasy world where he can be with anyone he wants and do anything he wants. It's selfish because the sex act that God designed for the husband and wife is taking place in the mind. Eyes can be closed to enjoy his imagination or they can be opened to enjoy pornography. Either way, it needs no one else...and it's selfish. And yes, masturbation is an addiction, too. Many men have told me they thought they would stop after marriage. Sadly, addictions don't stop at the altar.

A wife hates it when she finds out about her husband's masturbation because she knows that her husband is enjoying a sexual release alone. The oneness is absent. She feels unwanted, unneeded...and unloved. And it hurts. When pornography is involved the pain is worse because a wife cannot compete with the women in porn. How does she compete with the fantasy who is ready any time of the day and willing to do anything he wants?

I want this wife to know that she is not alone. There are many other wives who know the pain she is experiencing. The good news is that she can help. Here's how:

1. Pray for him daily...that he would flee from this temptation. He's done it for over 20 years, and unless God, by His grace, frees him from it, he has a tough road ahead. He needs prayer most of all.
2. Don't confront him with semen stained underwear with an "I gotcha" attitude. She'll get denial in return or names and bruises. She needs to be gentle in her confrontation. Gentle, yet firm...
3. Encourage accountability with another man. All men understand masturbation, yet we act like no one else has done it except us. (Sometimes we're not very smart...) It's OK to talk about. And it's OK to be accountable to another man. We

*need each other, especially if this is a problem.*

*4. I would also tell her that his masturbation is not because she is not desirable, or pretty or sexy enough for him. Again, he's done it from childhood...and he did it with porn before they were married. She does not need to own it as her fault...which many women do.*

*5. Encourage him to set boundaries for himself. When is he most prone to masturbation? When is he most likely to give in? Where does he masturbate? Does he stay up late after she goes to bed? Try to encourage him to answer these questions and then set up some boundaries or protective measures.*

*6. Finally, encourage him to pray, too. In fact, they can pray together! She knows his secret and she loves him. They can talk about it...*

I hope you find this as helpful as I did!

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

**See Also:**

**[Pornography](#) by Kerby Anderson**

**Probe Answers Our Email:**

- How Do I Handle My Husband's Porn Addiction?
  - [I Need Resources for My Porn Addiction](#)
  - [What's Wrong with Masturbation, Anyway?](#)
- [Men Have Always Looked at Porn—What's the Big Deal?](#)
  - [I'm a Compulsive Masturbator](#)

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# “At What Point Is It Lust?”

At what point is it lusting? I often find myself looking at a girl's back side a lot. But not to the point of looking at her in a sexual way. Just admiring the figure. It sounds stupid, but I know other Christian guys that do it, but I feel convicted every time I casually look at a girl.

There is nothing wrong at first glance with noticing and even admiring that a woman is attractive. God created women to be attractive to men and that's normal.

Wise people have said that lusting starts when you either give a second look, or you let your look linger. When that happens, it's usually because you're filling your eyes on the woman's physical appearance, not who she is as a person made in the image of God.

You don't have to be sexually aroused to be lusting. If you're "looking at a girl's backside a lot," you're headed toward lusting. Allowing your gaze to linger so you can admire a girl's figure is something that should wait for your wife. It's a husband's prerogative, but not anyone else's. You may be admiring God's handiwork, but you are letting your eyes rest too long on someone else's wife, either present or future.

How would you feel if you knew there were guys watching your future wife's backside?

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

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# “How Far Is Too Far?”

My question is one that has been posed to me on many occasions by many a frustrated teenager. They hear all the information about sex and everything that goes with it, but the one question which I still find being asked all the time is... “How far is too far?” as well as ways to prevent themselves from reaching these boundaries. Would it be possible for an article to be written from a biblical perspective on how far is too far and ways to prevent adolescents from crossing these boundaries?

Since I have worked with high school students and addressed this issue a lot, let me share what wisdom I have gleaned from others and learned from the Word.

Another way to phrase your question is, “Where should I draw the line?”

The line is the place where our behavior moves from that which glorifies God, to that which is sin or leads to sin (either mental or physical sin).

Scripture says, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor. 7:1). One of the meanings for the Greek word for “touch” means “to press against in such a way as to kindle or catch on fire.” So another way to translate this verse would be, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman so that they become sexually aroused.”

This is true wisdom, because once people become sexually aroused, hormones kick in and it gets hard to think rationally. So it is far easier to stay in control by limiting our behavior to that which isn't sexual.

I suggest that this means not touching anyone in a way you wouldn't dream of touching one's pastor (or pastor's wife, depending on your gender), or family member. When it comes to dating couples, that means not kissing each other with anything more than you'd give your sister or brother.

So the bottom line is, I suggest that "the line" should be drawn between a short kiss and a long kiss. Short kisses are not necessarily sexual, but long kisses are. Sexual arousal happens after you cross the line from a short kiss to a long kiss. Sexual activity outside of marriage is the sin the Bible calls fornication; it's a sin because God wants all sex (and sexual activity, even if it's far short of intercourse) to be contained within marriage since it's so powerful. Many kids define sex as intercourse, but God's view of sex is far broader than that. Even physiologically, we can tell that sexual feelings occur as a result of doing things that are a long way from intercourse.

Things become startlingly clear when you think: "What if I touch or kiss my brother or sister in this way?" If the thought of French kissing your sibling grosses you out (and I hope it would), then that means it's sexual, and it falls in the category of "off limits."

This discussion is a different approach from "How far is too far," because that question really means "How close to the edge of the cliff can I walk without falling off?" God wants us to ask, "What do I need to do to stay holy and glorify God in everything I do?"

I hope this helps.

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