

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Al Denson Show and for tuning in every week to our program. My prayer for you is to be encouraged in your daily walk with Christ through the words of this booklet. Our hope is that in turn you will tell others of what God is doing through our ministry to youth and parents on TV. I am convinced you will not find another program on any network anywhere that deals with issues today's youth and their parents are facing, and provides answers from a Godly perspective.

In addition, we would love for you to help us by going to our web site at www.aldenson.com. Here you can write to us, order additional material like this booklet, check out all my music, have a daily bible study, and stay up to date on the ministry. You can also send us a prayer request and questions for the TV show. But more importantly, please continue to be in prayer with us as we work together to help those that are in need.

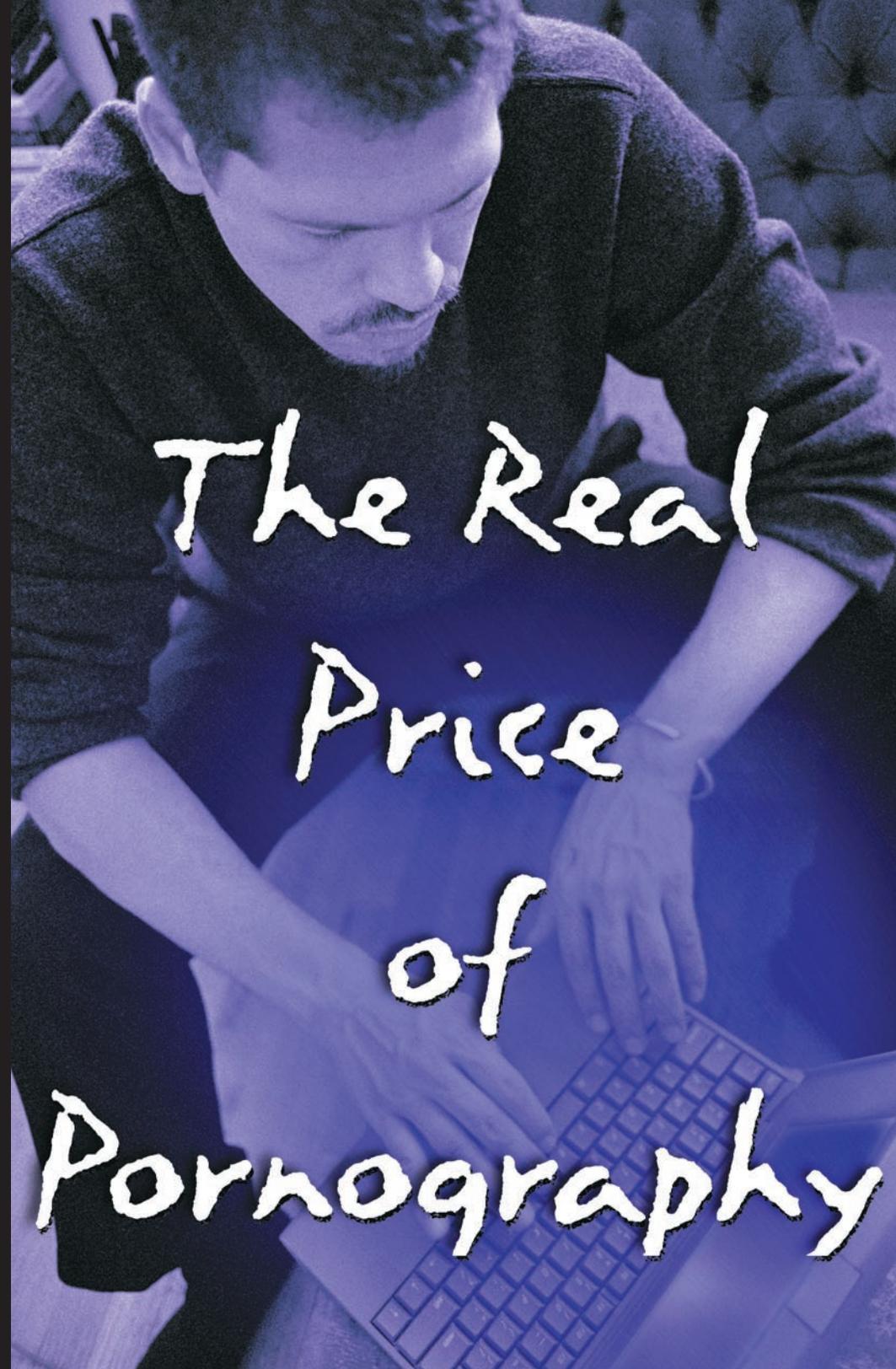
Thanks for watching and God Bless!

Sincerely,



An Outreach of Celebration Ministries

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The Real
Price
of
Pornography



Most artists create for only a brief moment in time. That phenomenon was once known as "15 minutes of fame". Yet even in a fickle world, there still emerge a talented few that transcends time and trends. With nearly 15 years as a major label recording artist and seven hit

albums to his credit, Al Denson is that kind of artist.

But the attention and acclaim his artistry has brought him over the years are anything but the routine rewards of worldly success. Rather, they are the fruits of a life of purpose and passion, and a mission that has always reached far beyond merely making music.

The millions of young people Al has performed for, befriended, counseled, consoled and clowned around with in his career already know that. And thousands more are finding out every day.

This past year has seen Al expand his efforts to a global audience through the reach of his daily syndicated television production, "The Al Denson Show." "You've got to reach out to people where they are with the most powerful means and this form of media allows you to build trust and a rapport," says Al. "This has all been so amazing. I can't imagine what lies in store when the Lord finally calls me home, but I don't have to wait for heaven to receive rewards. I get them every time a kid comes up to me and says, 'I heard what you said, and I accepted Christ.' You can't ask for anything more or better than that."

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The Real Price of Pornography

The price you will pay for pornography in dollars and cents is high, but the price you will pay for your involvement with pornography is even higher. It can cost you everything. This booklet is about counting the cost. If you haven't already been exposed to pornography, you probably will be at some point in your life. In the world in which we live, you don't have to go looking for it, it will come looking for you. You need to make the decision now as to what you will do when that temptation comes. You need to count

the cost. If you are already involved in some way in the world of pornography, you too, need to honestly count the cost and see if you are willing to pay the real price of pornography.

The word "pornography" comes from two Greek words: pornos which means "a prostitute and the sexual activity with such a person;" and graphe, which means "writing" and includes images. It is generally defined as "any sexually oriented material intended to arouse." Pornography can be classified in two categories: hard-core and soft-core. Hard-core includes total nudity, and various kinds of sex acts, many of which are violent or perverted.

Soft-core, like Playboy, may have full nudity, but it doesn't emphasize violence or sexual perversion.

Regardless whether our courts call it legal or illegal, God calls it SIN.

According to the laws of our nation, most pornography is illegal. Regardless whether our courts call it legal or illegal, God clearly calls it SIN. The Bible says in II Timothy 2:22 to "flee youthful lusts." Yet it seems today that the culture in which you live has given you a personal invitation not to run from lust, but to hang out with it. What was considered by the majority of society to be dangerous, dis-

gusting, and perverted only 30 years ago is now "in."

Author Henry Rogers gives us these facts to consider about pornography:

- Universities across this country offer courses on porn that both defend and promote it as legitimate subject matter.
- Prime-time TV characters talk about sex or display sexual behavior an average of once every four minutes.
- 65% of all movies today are R rated movies that average over 50 acts of violence, sex, and profanity each.
- Pornographic video rentals have increased 100% in the last five years and there are

85% of all of the revenue from pornographic magazines finds its way into the hands of organized crime.

more new pornographic videos released in two weeks than Hollywood releases in one year. In 1997 the adult film and video industry grossed \$4.2 billion.

- When it comes to phone sex Americans are dialing up 15 million minutes a month.

The Internet is now the fastest-growing way to distribute illegal pornography. There are hundreds of thousands of sexually explicit web sites on the Internet, and sex on the Internet is growing daily. This Cyberspace porn is generating about a billion dollars every year.

Cybersex chat rooms are packed around the clock. It is estimated that 50,000 people each day are chatting on 500-700 sex talk lines.

A professor at Oklahoma State University did a study of 450 sixth graders that have cable at home and found that 66% of them watch at least one program a month that contained nudity or heavy sexual involvement.

Studies show that boys ages 12-17 are among the primary consumers of pornography and that porn is a major source of their sex education. The messages that pornography sends to these young minds is that violence and abuse against women, drug addiction, prostitution, exhibitionism, and voyeurism are "normal."

The American Family Association has reported that states that have the highest readership of men's magazines have the highest incidence of reported rape.

85% of all of the revenue from pornographic magazines finds its way into the hands of organized crime.

Still, with all this evidence to the contrary, many people will try to tell you that pornography is a moral issue and that you can't "legislate morality." That is not true. Every law we have in this country is about morality. Have you ever heard anyone say about murder, rape, or robbery that you can't "legislate morality?" Hardly. Killing, raping, and stealing are moral issues, but we have laws against them.

Another argument you will hear is that laws against pornography violate the First Amendment of our Constitution, Freedom of Speech. What they forget is that our forefathers who wrote the Constitution intended that with every right there would also come a responsibility. The First Amendment doesn't mean that we can say or do anything we choose, regardless of the impact on others or on society as a whole.

"But pornography doesn't affect anyone but me," many people say. "I'm not hurting anyone else." Nothing could be further from the truth. Look at the all victims of this so called "victimless" crime:

1. Lust, which is a perversion of the sexual desire that God gave you, is sin and sin grieves the heart of God. Sin cost Jesus His life on a brutal cross. Pornography is hurting God.

2. It is destroying the testimony of Christian men, some even in the ministry, who have become enslaved and whose secret lives have been discovered. Pornography is hurting the cause of Christ.

3. It is polluting and destroying the moral fiber of our country. Pornography is hurting America.

4. It influences attitudes and behaviors. It stimulates interest in the deviant, such as group sex and torture, and encourages violence. The serial killer, Ted Bundy, who was executed in Florida for raping and murdering 28 women, said that he grew up in a loving Christian home, but that his desire to kill came from years of addiction to pornography. Pornography is hurting our society.

5. It is destroying families where men are addicted and spend hundreds of dollars a week from their paychecks on pornography. Pornography is hurting families.

6. Addiction to pornography doesn't end just because a person gets married. It is destroying marriages by introducing a third (or fourth, or fifth...) partner into the relationship

and weakening the commitment. Wives have their self-esteem shattered, and end up feeling worthless and rejected. Pornography is hurting marriages.

7. It is destroying careers where even top-executives are being fired because they can't stay out of X-rated porn sites on the job. Pornography is hurting men.

8. It is trapping women in a world where they are dehumanized, degraded, and abused. The majority of these women were sexually abused as children. Pornography is hurting women.

9. It lies to girls and tells them how to look and act to get and keep the interest of a boy. It lies to boys and tells them what to value in a girl. Pornography is hurting teenagers.

10. It leads to child molestation. 87% of convicted molesters of girls and 77% of convicted molesters of boys admit to using pornography, most often as they commit their crimes. Pornography is hurting little children.

That's who pornography hurts, and the truth is, it will hurt you, too.

Pornography perverts the meaning and the beauty of sex as God intended it.

1. Pornography cheapens and devalues sex. It distorts reality, turns a woman into something that isn't real, and at the same time gives you unreal expectations of sexual fulfillment.

2. Pornography puts you in a world of fantasy that is addictive and requires you to have more in order to get the same level of pleasure and excitement that you experienced before. It so blurs the line between reality and fantasy that the temptation to act out what you see will grow as you get deeper and deeper into pornography.

3. It is addictive and always leaves you wanting more because the relationships aren't real and therefore leave you unsatisfied and empty. It also isolates you from others because it is normally engaged in alone.

4. It is selfish and self-serving. It involves no intimacy, and keeps you physically and emotionally detached, which causes great loneliness. This loneliness only leads to more escape through pornography.

5. It is an addiction that can be passed to your children and grandchildren. I Kings 15:3 says, "And he walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him."

Pornography takes what is meant to be beautiful, complex, and relational and reduces it to nothing more than a cheap counterfeit. It demeans and dehumanizes human life. It is an easy out for those who are too lazy or selfish

to work at a relationship, at trustworthiness, or conflict resolution. The purpose of pornographers is not to give you pleasure, but to hook you so you will want more.

Pornography perverts the meaning and the beauty of sex as God intended it. God created and designed sex. It was His idea! His plan for sexuality is what gives meaning to our physical desire, to two sexes, to love, to reproduction, to the relationship between a husband and a wife. The only way we will ever know real fulfillment is to follow God's plan for our sexuality.

There are three questions that Christian teenagers usually have when dealing with pornography: How do I win over the temptation to use pornography? Is masturbation a sin? If I am already addicted to pornography and/or masturbation, how do I stop? Let's try to answer those for you.

Temptation

Chances are if you are reading this booklet, temptation is something you have not handled very successfully up until now. In fact, you may have given into temptation so many times that you feel winning over temptation is hopeless for you. Before we say anything else about temptation, you need a dose of hope and encouragement.

The Bible says in I Corinthians 10:13, "Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you. And no temptation (or problem) is irresistible. You can trust God to keep the temptation (or problem) from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for He has promised this and will do what He says. He will show you how to escape temptation's (and problem's) power so that you can bear up patiently against it."

You may be facing the greatest temptation of all right now--the temptation to give up, to surrender to the enemy that you are fighting. God wants to give you the power to overcome temptation, but you must turn to Him for help. God can supernaturally deliver you from the guilt and hopelessness that you feel. God has confidence in you, even if you have none in yourself. He says in this verse that NOTHING will come your way that is so strong that you cannot stand up against it. God believes in your ability to fight, to cope, and to win. If you don't believe in God as confidently as He believes in you, then simply ask Him for the courage and the faith you need to trust Him.

Remember the words of I Corinthians 10:13, "...You can trust God to keep the temptation (or problem) from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for he has promised this and He will do what He says." Jesus said that heaven and earth will pass away but God's words will stand forever. We just read God's words and they will stand

forever as the solid, unmovable truth. God says that you can make it, so you can.

Now, there are some things that you need to know about temptation. Here is the most important one: Temptation itself is not a sin. Yielding to temptation is the sin. Temptation is Satan's attempt to get you to commit an act of sin. The whole aim and purpose of temptation is to cause you to violate God's law and principles. You see, if you have committed your life to Jesus Christ, Satan has lost your soul. Your life now belongs to God, and Satan has lost you forever. But this doesn't mean that Satan has given up on you. The next best thing he can do is destroy your faith and your testimony by attacking you with temptation.

If you have been saved, you are free in Christ. You have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus and set free from the bondage of sin. Your sin debt has been paid and you are no longer condemned. You have been pardoned and given a new life in Christ. The only thing left for Satan to do is to target your weaknesses and tempt you to sin. If he can bring guilt and defeat into your life, he can make you miserable and keep you from being usable to God.

Don't let Satan put you on a guilt trip because tempting thoughts enter your mind. Jesus was tempted, the Bible says, but never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). It is not a sin to be

A lot of people make jokes about their lust, but Jesus doesn't take the thought life lightly.

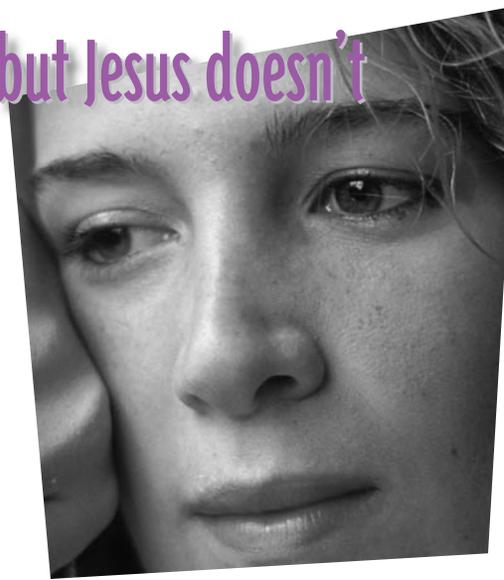
tempted. Temptation is just the "bait" that Satan uses to try and get you to sin. After you are tempted (which is not a sin), it is your own lust that pushes you to sin.

For example, say a beautiful woman drives up in your front yard in a stolen sports car with the word "Temptation" written across the side of it and offers you the ride of your life. Would you be guilty of anything just because of the woman and the car pulled up in your yard? No, of course not. But if you stood there, and stood there, and looked at this gorgeous woman for a long time, and considered her tempting offer, and began to think about it, and imagine what it would be like to be with her and to ride in that great car, you would have allowed the temptation, at that point, to become lust and sin has been conceived. The next thing you know you are in the stolen car driving away into the sunset with that beautiful woman. Your lust would have given birth to sin when you obeyed your lust, gave into temptation and got into the car.

A lot of people make jokes about their lust, but Jesus doesn't take the thought life lightly. He said in Matthew 5:28 that looking at a person and imagining yourself sexually involved is as serious as actually committing the act. Obviously, the consequences of committing the act are more serious than the consequences of the thought, but they are both sin, and both serious because Jesus knew that thoughts give birth to actions.

Temptation always begins with a thought. Once your mind focuses and dwells on a tempting thought, you are in real danger of going through with it. You may try to talk yourself out of it. You may argue with yourself, but it is difficult to debate yourself out of a desire. Please understand that all of your desires are not necessarily wrong. The temptation that Satan always uses is to get you to fulfill those desires in the wrong way. He also tells you that the only way to make the desire go away is to give into it, but that is a lie. Every time you give into temptation the desires will only be stronger the next time.

No matter how long you walk with God or how strong a Christian you are, you will always have to deal with temptation. Be prepared to deal with it at every turn. But don't fear temptation. Just because it comes into your life doesn't mean you have to be defeated by it. And just because you have failed before doesn't mean that you will again. The Bible says in James 4:7, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." "Resist" is a defensive term. It means that you are to stand firm, fearlessly look the devil in the eye, and tell him in Jesus name to beat it! The Bible promises that when you do, he will run from you!



If you are serious about winning over temptation, the two keys to victory are found in these verses:

Romans 12:1-2 says, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer (present) your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve of what God's will is, His good, pleasing and perfect will."

1. Present, offer, yield your body to God. This means that you are to dedicate yourself to God in a deliberate and intentional manner. Before you can win over temptation, you must understand that your body belongs to God. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "...You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body." Christ died for your sins and His blood "redeemed" you.

Years ago when purchases were made at the local grocery store or the gas station, the mer-

chant would give you S&H Green Stamps. The number of stamps you would get was determined by the amount of money you spent. You would take the stamps home and paste them in books. There was an S&H catalog that was filled with all sorts of things that you could exchange for your books of Green Stamps. Whenever you saved up enough stamps, you could take them to an "S&H Redemption Center." There you would exchange your books of stamps for the gift you wanted. In other words, you were "redeeming" your stamps for something of much greater value.

When you gave your heart and life to Jesus, He redeemed you. He exchanged your old, sinful, broken life for His life. If you are a Christian, you belong to Him. Your body is not your own; Jesus redeemed it with His own blood. So, now it does matter what you do with His property. Understanding that fact will help you view temptation differently.

2. Be transformed by the "renewing of your mind." The Bible tells you not to let the world squeeze you into its own mold. In other words, don't be like the world in the way you think and live your life, but rather be transformed into the image of Christ by having your mind renewed. To win over temptation you must guard what you feed your mind and begin to think God's thoughts. The Bible says in Isaiah 26:3, "You will keep in perfect peace,

him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.” If you are struggling with thoughts of temptation, commit your mind and your thoughts to God every day. Determine with an act of your will to let Him have total control of your thoughts and to keep your mind fixed on Him. Remember, whatever you feed is going to grow, and whatever you starve is going to die.

Masturbation

Masturbation is a subject that troubles many Christian teenagers who honestly want to know if it is a sin. Masturbation is not specifically mentioned in the Bible, and is not a sin but it does place you in a dangerous position to sin. Here’s what we mean:

- 1.** Masturbation is almost always physically acting out a sexual, lustful, impure thought. We know that the Bible says that this is sin.
- 2.** Masturbation often involves pornography and you know what God thinks of that. Even if pornography is not involved in the beginning, the temptation to use it will grow as masturbation alone becomes boring and you feel the need to make it more “exciting.”
- 3.** Masturbation is like pornography in that the fantasy provides expectations that real life just can’t compete with. A future husband or wife will always be a disappointment compared to the fantasy.



- 4.** Masturbation is addictive and the Bible says that we are not to be slaves to anything or anyone but Jesus Christ. In I Corinthians 9:25-27 the Bible says that we are to control our bodies, not let our bodies control us.
- 5.** Masturbation can become an escape and a way not to face and deal with other problems in your life. For people who have a fear of emotional intimacy, it can look like a “safe” substitute. Both of these are emotionally unhealthy and not pleasing to God.

I think that it is fairly easy to see that for a Christian teenager, masturbation is not the best choice. Is masturbation a sin? By itself, no. But it is a very dangerous activity with the potential to put you in a sinful situation. Should you take the risk? Count the cost before you decide. You have nothing of real value to gain by making masturbation a part of your life, and everything of value to lose.

Addiction

Addiction to pornography, just like drugs or alcohol, will alter a person’s mood and will give them an intense, pleasurable high from their own brain chemicals. It is possible to get addicted, not so much to the pornography itself, but to the physical “high” that comes with it. Over time, the addict will require more explicit and deviant material to get the same pleasure that he did previously. As the conscience becomes desensitized, things that were once repulsive or immoral become acceptable. Someone has said that pornography is like “athlete’s foot of the mind.” The more you scratch it, the more it itches and spreads.

An addiction is nothing more than a habitual sin that has a hold on your life and seems as if it won’t let you go. When sin becomes a habit in your life, that habit becomes your

lifestyle. As you give in to the sin and fail over and over again, Satan begins to hurl accusations at you. “A real Christian wouldn’t do this. You’re probably not saved. How could God love you? You’re such a loser.”

Once you begin thinking like that, the guilt, shame, doubt, and confusion become overwhelming and at that point, you become totally defeated and discouraged. The real tragedy of habitual sin or an addiction is that it leaves you in bondage. This is where you begin to feel trapped and helpless to change. The good news is that you don’t have to put up with this kind of bondage in your life. Satan does not have an automatic hold on your life.

Christ has already won the victory over Satan, sin, and temptation. If you are a Christian you “are more than a conqueror” (Romans 8:37). The same power that resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead is available to you to overcome Satan. “Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). The Holy Spirit that lives in you can empower you to overcome any sinful habit or addiction. You already have the resources and the power necessary to win; you simply need to learn to appropriate those resources and that power.



While you do need to be convicted of your sin and of all the sinful choices that got you where you are, you must not allow that conviction to turn to self-condemnation. Satan wants you to feel inadequate and worthless. If he can succeed at this, he can sentence you to a life of bondage. Do you know how an animal trainer can keep an elephant in captivity? When the elephant is only a baby weighing a few hundred pounds, the trainer will put a shackle around its leg and attach it to a stake in the ground. The baby elephant will try to break free but it can't. When that elephant becomes an adult weighing several tons, it is still held captive by the same shackle attached to the same stake. How is that possible? Well, elephants aren't very smart. They remember not being able to escape as a baby, so as an adult, they don't even try. The elephant isn't in bondage to the stake, it is in bondage to wrong thinking. The same can be true in your life.

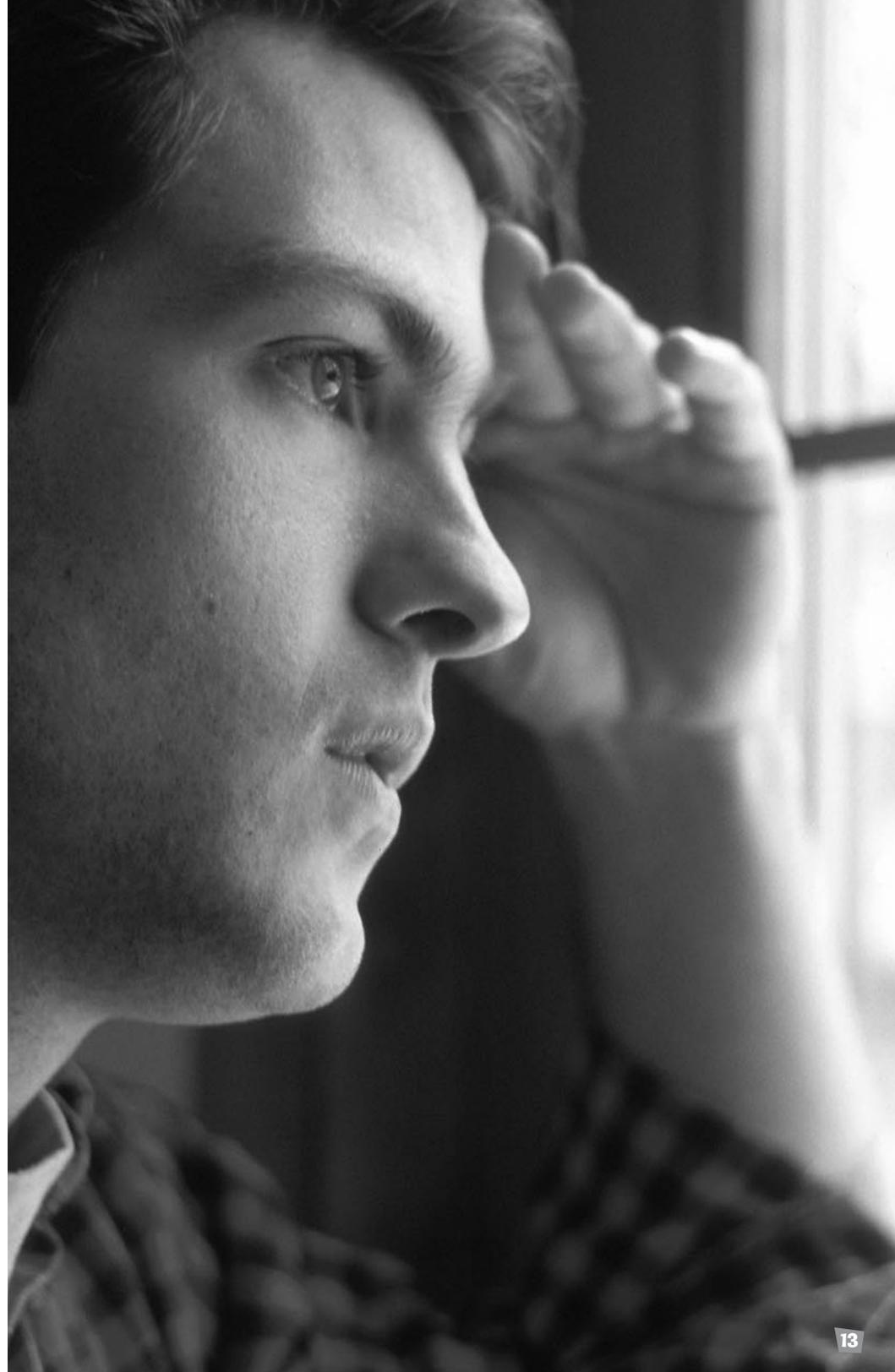
There is a hard question that you need to ask yourself before you can go any further. It is the same question that Jesus asked a man in the Bible. John 5:1-9 tells the story of a crippled man. Imagine this scene for a moment with me. Picture a beautiful pool with large marble columns. There were sick people with every kind of illness sitting and lying around beside

the pool. Some had been there for years because they all believed that periodically an angel came and stirred the waters, and when that happened the first person in the pool got healed.

The crippled man had been an invalid for 38 years. For some reason, Jesus picked him out of the crowd that day and walked straight over to him. Jesus asked the man a strange but important question, "Do you want to get well?" Instead of saying yes, the man made an excuse. Jesus ignored the excuse and said, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was healed and did just that.

You may wonder why the man didn't immediately say "yes, I don't want to live this way any longer, I want to be different." The truth is that he probably had become very comfortable settling for what he had. After all, the pool was familiar territory. All the other sick people that went to the pool everyday were his friends. He probably liked being around them because then he didn't feel so bad about himself. Being crippled also gave him an excuse not to do life like other people.

You can be a lot like that man. You can become comfortable with where you live and how you live. Jesus is saying the same thing to you that he said to that man by the pool, "Do you want to be different? Get up! Don't stay where you are or how you are." How about you? This is a question that you must answer before you can be free.



It isn't enough just to run away from what is bad, unless you are running TOWARD what is good.

Here are some practical things you can do if you are in bondage to pornography and/or masturbation:

1. Realize that you can choose what you think about. You can't control everything that comes into your mind, but you can choose what you will do with the thought once it is there. What you think about is going to determine how you feel, and how you feel is going to determine what you do. The Bible says very clearly in Philippians 4:8, "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 praise worthy--think about such things." That makes no allowance for lust.

2. Be careful what you are placing before your eyes. Psalm 101:3 says, "I will set before my eyes no vile thing." If you are struggling with lust, stay away from places and circumstances that stir it up. II Timothy 2:22 says, "Now flee youthful lusts..." I Corinthians 6:18 says, "Flee immorality..." Turn off the TV, shut the magazine, leave the theater, turn off the computer, walk--no, RUN in the other direction. This is a choice that you can make.

3. Talk to a same-sex Christian counselor or leader. You may think this would be too embarrassing to do, but if you are really having a problem and you really want help, then take

a deep breath and do it. What you will find is that they are human and have had the same struggles and temptations you have. A Christian adult who can understand what you are going through, pray with you and hold you accountable will be a tremendous help. In severe cases, some long-term counseling can assist you to freedom.

4. Don't allow Satan to keep you depressed and useless to God with guilt. If you fail, confess your sin to God and claim the forgiveness that is yours because you are in Christ, but don't carry a load of guilt around. Do you realize that every time you confess a sin to God that the Bible says He not only forgives you, but He forgets about it? Isn't that great! So every time you go to Him with a repentant heart, even if it is the 100th time, it is like the first time you have been there confessing that same sin! Admit to God that you are helpless to overcome this problem on your own and can't do it without His power. Rest in the fact that no matter how many times you fail God loves and accepts you unconditionally.

5. II Timothy 2:22 goes on to say, "(Now flee youthful lusts), and PURSUE righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who

call on the Lord from a pure heart." It isn't enough just to run away from what is bad, unless you are running TOWARD what is good. You must be aggressively pursuing the things of the Lord. Use the time that you were spending in sinful activities doing things that honor God. This verse also tells you who to spend your time with--"those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." Make sure your friends are Christians that are also pursuing the things of the Lord. Be with people as much as possible. Leave your bedroom door unlocked. Turn your computer screen so it faces an open door. Have someone else install blocking software on your computer. PURSUE righteousness.



Kimberly Drake is the founding president and executive director of Spokane Washington's Citizens for Community Values. Just a few years ago she was seemingly trapped in the world of pornography and addiction. She says that John 12:46 describes what God did for her. "I (Jesus) have come as a Light to shine in a dark world so that all who put their trust in Me will no longer walk in darkness." Kimberly says that God met her in the darkness and loved her right where she was. His light showed her the way out and she has three things she says will help anyone to overcome an addiction:

FACE the fact you have a problem

TRACE the source of your problem through counseling

ERASE the lies Satan has planted in your mind and allow God to replace them with His Truth and unconditional love.

This is a battle that you can win--be encouraged!