

Why This Sin Will Sear Your Conscience

In 2015, Gary Lee Williamson, a former Virginia National Guard colonel, was ordered to serve 10 years in jail on federal child-porn charges. He pleaded guilty to charges of knowingly receiving and distributing child pornography.

Records showed that Williamson had visited child porn sites for at least four years and had over 2,000 images. He also admitted to controlling email accounts and using websites to trade suspected child pornography.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel P. Bubar said, "This was not a onetime moral failure. This was ongoing."

When Williamson spoke to the court, he mentioned he had been viewing porn for 40 years.

"It's a terrible thing when a man sears his conscience over four decades of pornography viewing," he said. "I regret the shame I brought upon my family."

But is it really possible to "sear your conscience" with excessive porn usage?

How Does Porn Affect the Brain?

Pornography has strong effects on the brain. According to Dr. Jeffrey Satinover of Princeton University, "It is as though we have devised a form of heroin ... usable in the privacy of one's own home and injected directly to the brain through the eyes."

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centers. It is also the main part of reward-motivational behavior.

Cognitive-Behavioral Psychiatrist Dr. Kevin Majeres said,

“When someone prone to addiction views pornography, he gets overstimulated by dopamine, and his brain destroys some dopamine receptors. This makes him feel depleted, so he goes back to pornography, but, having fewer receptors, this time it requires more to get the same dopamine thrill; but this causes his brain to destroy more receptors; so he feels an even greater need for pornography to stimulate him.”

How the Conscience Is Seared

To further explain the science of the brain, Dr. Tim Jennings, author of *The God-Shaped Brain*, explains in the Conquer Series that the amygdala is the fear circuitry of the brain. When it activates and stays active chronically, it actually impairs the love circuits in the brain's cortex.

Dr. Jennings continues, “The part of the brain that gives conviction of wrongdoing and redirects inappropriate behavior on a genetic and molecular level and structural level changes such that it stops responding. They get less and less conviction of guilt, less and less anxiety and stress at doing it, and pretty soon they become numb, and there's no guilt at all.”

The Bible describes people who have progressed in their sinful acts until they no longer feel convicted as those “who [have] their consciences seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:2). To be seared means your conscience has been made callous and unfeeling.

Luke Gilkerson, formerly of Covenant Eyes, said, “Desensitized to pleasure, sensitized to lust, and crippled in willpower—these are some of the things modern science is unearthing about the effects of porn on the brain.”

Like Riding a Bike Downhill

Cognitive-behavioral psychiatrist Dr. Kevin Majeres illustrates the problem.

“Like the guy pedaling downhill, it might seem like things are getting easier; but his ability to slow down and change directions is getting harder and harder. His decision to start pedaling downhill is amplified, but he is now a slave to the process, and eventually he will despair. He has really lost the freedom he had originally.”

Pornography addiction can also be like the snooze button on your alarm clock. The first time the alarm sounds, you can hit the button, and it will stop. You may hit the button another time or two, but soon, you will ignore it altogether.

Like the clock, you can silence the pornography alarm in your conscience a few times. But you will finally ignore it altogether, and you will experience the harmful consequences of not being able to stop.

It's Not Too Late to Recover

If it sounds like there is a point of no return in your porn addiction, there is good news. There are three main points in your favor.

Most importantly, God loves you. He knows all about your struggle with pornography, but He wants to restore you and have you walking in freedom from porn. Nothing you have done is beyond His grace and mercy.

In time, the damaged pathways in your mind can be replaced by new pathways. Just decide now that you will do whatever is necessary to defeat your porn addiction.

There are many men who have won their battle with porn, and you can, too. It won't be easy, but it will certainly be worth the fight.

A Proven Process for Finding Freedom

The Conquer Series is a valuable resource in helping you achieve a porn-free life. The series' 12 DVDs include much

more information on the science of porn addiction. There are also powerful teachings, exciting testimonies and action footage designed to help you break free from porn.

Talk to your church leaders about using the Conquer Series in your church. You can also work through the series on your own, or join an online Conquer Group.

Order the Conquer Series today to begin the road to your total recovery from pornography.