

Surviving Your Husband's Porn Addiction

✖ *If your husband is a slave to porn, you can play an active role in his recovery. Don't be a victim—God can give you victory.*

YOUR

HUSBAND'S ADDICTION TO pornography has just been discovered. The aftermath of this betrayal leaves every precious memory grimy and tainted. You muse back on your wedding night. Was he thinking of some porn star as he touched you? When you were working to conceive a baby together by night, what had he been conceiving with his computer monitor by day?

Your dreams are shattered. You despise him for how his sexual addiction makes you see him, and you're panicked by how it makes you see yourself.

You're tempted to think, *I knew he never had eyes only for me, but I never dreamed it could go this far. I feel so ugly now.* And when he isn't quick to repent, who can blame you when you icily sneer, "Just get lost with that cuddly computer of yours and have fun."

Head

spinning, heart breaking, you cry in desperate prayer: "Can I ever trust my husband again? My whole marriage is a mirage! Where are You, Lord?"

God is right beside you. Sure, it may appear that He has taken His hand off of your marriage, but your husband's sin has been in God's sights for some time—a sin that has been washing out your spiritual protection and threatening to flood your children's lives with generational sin—in spite of how well your husband's been hiding the evidence. But now God's blown your husband's cover, a sure sign of God's active role in your marriage.

God wants you to take an active role, too, and the first step in rebuilding trust with your husband is to trust God enough to find His heart for your husband in this mess. God wants restoration.

GOD'S HEART FOR MEN WHO STRUGGLE

Recently, my husband Fred and I knelt in intercession as he prepared to challenge a large group of pastors to deeper sexual purity. Without warning, Fred suddenly broke into deep sobs. Moments later, he walked out and spoke with a grace and power I had never seen in him before.

Later,
he recounted, "I wasn't sure I had the right attitude, so I
prayed,
'Lord, I want Your heart as I speak to these men today. As
many as half
of these guys have been checking out the porn, and You know
how that
frustrates me to no end. But Lord, I don't want to speak out
of my
feelings. Can You let me feel Your feelings toward them
today?'

"Instantly,
the Lord laid His emotions inside my chest. I burst into
tears, and
felt as though my heart would explode. Then, about three
minutes later,
it stopped as quickly as it began. Quietly, the Lord
whispered, 'There.
Now you know how I ache for My cherished pastors, in spite of
their sin.
Speak to them from that aching place in My heart.'"

God
wants you to minister to your husband in that same grace and
power, and
He can give you His heart for your husband as easily as He
gave Fred
His heart for the pastors. God wants His heart reigning inside
of you,
enabling you to see beyond your husband's sin and into the
brokenness
behind it all.

I speak from
personal experience. Even when Fred's temper and sexual sin
were ripping
up our home, I could see value in him beyond his sin. He had

put me
first in so many ways in our relationship and it made me
willing to want
to go an extra mile for him.

I
could also see the dysfunctional pain and confusion still
trailing him
from his broken childhood home. I saw that he had never had
one
completely faithful person in his entire life. I decided to
become that
first person.

There was
another reason I chose restoration over divorce. God loves
restoration
for the same reason He hates divorce: the children. He knows
how hard it
is to raise godly children in the wake of divorce, and He
knows that
the message of salvation passes down to them most easily when
the
parents are one.

Speaking of
husbands and wives through His prophet Malachi, God says: "Has
not the
Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they're His. And why
one?
Because He was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in
your
spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. 'I
hate
divorce,' says the Lord God" (Mal. 2:15-16, NIV).

In
light of all this, I knew I had no right to think of myself

first in
our marital troubles. I had to think of the kids before I
thought of
myself and, so, I had to see Fred and the marriage before
myself, too.
The same is true for you.

Granted,
your marriage may now be in shambles, and what lies ahead
might even be
worse. But God's call on your life still remains—to build a
marriage
that pictures Christ's relationship to the church.

IS DIVORCE EVER AN OPTION? Obviously, some men will never
soften. When is the damage from his sexual sin irreparable? Is
divorce ever an option?

Sure
it is. Adultery always makes divorce an option, and if your
husband
will not repent and refuses to turn from an ongoing, regular
porn habit,
he is an adulterer.

But if
you want a magical line between “reparable damage” and
“irreparable
damage” to trigger divorce proceedings for you, forget it.
There is no
line of irreparable damage in the distance somewhere; it lurks
right at
your door from the moment he refuses to repent. There is
nowhere to
hide.

Staying married surely
isn't safe. His sexual sin poses huge spiritual danger to the

whole

family, and compromises his spiritual protection over you. I was chased regularly in nightmares by Satan until Fred turned from his sexual sin. I haven't had such a nightmare since.

There

is also the generational sin we spoke of, as well as the ongoing danger that your sons and daughters will stumble upon his magazines, tapes and Web sites—the most common way young men fall into sexual bondage. Worst of all, your husband will not be the example your son needs to teach him that his Christian walk includes sexual purity. Cascading stages of irreparable damage begin to flow from the moment your husband refuses repentance.

Then why not

divorce? Because divorce brings destructive cascades of its own.

Statistics show that young men often turn to pornography in the wake of divorce to salve their emotional pain and to begin to explore their masculinity.

Furthermore,

sexual addiction counselors find that divorce is no effective answer.

Patrick Middleton, one such counselor in the Phoenix area, told me that

he has seen very little evidence that divorce leads to consistently

healthy results in families shattered by porn.

So

whether you stay or go, his sexual sin will wreak its havoc and there

are no easy options. But if you do choose to stay, it is time to take an

active role in the battle, doing all you can to release the law of

reaping and sowing into your husband's life.

Perhaps

your husband has paid little price for his sin in the past.

Those days

must end, so that he might come to his senses in the midst of the mess

he has made.

A HELPMATE IS AN ACTIVE ROLE

As

wives, God has given us two roles to play in marriage. One role relates

to submission, and the other involves our responsibility to be our

husband's helpmate. The trouble is that we too often play the wrong role

in the face of sexual sin, submitting quietly in the messy tide of

events, alternating between wringing our hands in worry and folding our

hands to pray while we wait for our husbands to turn.

This

is time to play the other role. You were created to help your husband

from the beginning: "'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will

make a helper suitable for him'" (Gen. 2:18).

The

word helper comes from a Hebrew word in Genesis, which means “a help as

his counterpart.” So what does a helper do? Fred likes to explain it

this way: As a helper, a wife’s role is to help lift her husband—boost

him, prod him, encourage him—to Christian greatness, or maturity in

Christ.

What is the most

effective way to help your husband? First, take steps toward your own

healing. Then, confront your husband, telling him what a Christian wife

expects of a mature, Christian husband in marriage and holding him

accountable to become that very man. Then put these four key actions in

motion:

1. Learn about the differences.

When a sexually addicted husband is unrepentant, a wife begins to heal

by learning the sexual differences between men and women. The real root

of his sexual sin lies elsewhere. Once you understand that his problem

is not about you, your beauty or sexiness, you can quickly recover your

sense of worth and focus on restoration.

2. Develop spiritual disciplines.

Prayer and Bible reading will allow the Lord to speak to your heart and

keep a steady walk with Him. If you are to heal, you need a stronger

prayer life than ever before.

You

also need to develop a few close female relationships for support,

insights and sharing your pain. Avoid male relationships like the

yourself emotionally separate from any other men and avoid discussing your dreams and desires with other men. Secular TV, movies

and books can feed the discontent that you have in your life, so avoid them.

Also, do not

overcommit your time. You have already been called to an important

ministry in God—restoring your husband and marriage. Give it the time

and energy that any great call deserves.

You

do not need to add other ministries or time stresses to your life. Keep

things pared down enough so that no matter what you are doing (raising

kids, working at an outside job, volunteering) you still have the time

and focus for the restoration process at home.

3. Reject hyper-vigilance.

Perhaps a fear-motivated question is plaguing you: But what if he does

it again? Reject fear. You naturally desire the safety that control can

bring, but a hyper-vigilant focus upon his every move cannot deliver the

safety you crave.

What you really need if you are to feel safe is a sense of your own self, your value in God, and the development of your own skills to communicate your pain and to set and enforce boundaries. Settle for nothing less than God's picture of marriage.

4. Set boundaries.

Refuse to be muzzled verbally. Your husband needs your complete honesty so that he can feel the full extent of the damage he is causing.

Insist that he bring his "church image" in line with the truth—that his sin is damaging his ministry in the spiritual realm. If he is on the church board, then he must step down. If he is on the worship team or missions board, then he must step down.

Clearly define what trustworthy means to you. If you need him to read a book and he won't, that will set back your trust.

If you need him to find an accountability partner and he doesn't, that will set back your trust, too. If you need him to go to a counselor with you and he won't, ramifications follow.

Explain to him that his patience with your healing process is a sign of a deep, genuine repentance in him and clear recognition that he

understands

what he has done to your relationship. That will grow trust every time.

Although

God loves mercy, He never taught that we are to turn our cheek to any

and every behavior in marriage. As a wife making your difficult decision

on whether to stay or go, you must base all your decisions up His full

Word.

Only then will your

faith stand through to the end, no matter what your husband does, and

only then will you feel free to take any appropriate actions.

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PARENTS MUST WALK THE WALK

By Beverly La Haye

As parents model walking in holiness, their children learn how to do it in the best possible environment.

Just

as Dad and Mom are developing a keen sensitivity to sin, so will their children, especially as their parents provide the same kind of wise discipline for their children that the Holy Spirit provides for them (see Heb. 12:7-11). Although today's sin-saturated society makes a mockery of the ideals of righteous living, godly parents who walk in the Spirit give their children an invaluable head start in knowing right from wrong.

Far more than

absorbing opinions or memorizing rules of behavior, the children in a Spirit-controlled family can develop their own personal relationship with the Savior, whose Spirit is the most available Counselor in the world. Walking in the Spirit also means that we receive God's guidance for the daily decisions and choices we must make.

Often,

the guidance of the Holy Spirit is very subtle, very much like a whisper in your ear. He may seem to push a quiet pause button in your spirit on a busy day, bringing your spouse, a child or a friend to mind for whom He wants you to pray, or guiding you to take the time to write that letter to your congressman about a matter of moral concern.

He

wants to show you whether or not to take a new job, which piano teacher to choose for your daughter, or how to make arrangements for the care of your elderly parent.

This

reminds me of the time my mother and my stepfather were past the age of being able to care for each other. My husband, Tim, and I prayed about this with deep concern, because our home was too small to add them to our family living quarters. We had the wonderful experience of watching the Lord take us step-by-step as He worked things out.

God

provided a bigger home for us with an attached apartment that was just perfect for my elderly parents. He answered our prayers in a way that we never dreamed was possible.

If

we truly desire to follow the Lord as completely as possible, He will lead us to make prudent decisions concerning His will for our families, and He will help us accomplish great things in His kingdom. What an exciting way to live!