

### III

#### **AND THE BEAT GOES ON (AND ON AND ON)** *A Story of Porn Addiction – Author Confidential*

I want to talk to you about the destructiveness of pornography in a person's life and how it also effects the lives of others around you.

Sexual sin, like pornography, is highly dangerous as it appeals to the sinful nature and the curious side of the flesh. It is so very dangerous as becomes highly addictive and has an appetite that cannot be satisfied. Satan's aim is to pervert the heart of man and get a hold of the passions of the heart

The destructiveness of pornography can also be likened unto growing a plant... A Bamboo plant. Bamboo has lots of roots that take over and grow so thick that it is almost impossible to totally remove. A plant like this when a little seedling can seem cute and harmless... even fun to water and watch it grow. But before you realise, this plant will quickly grow and develop a huge root system below the surface... which is not very easy to remove and makes the plant no longer cute, little and harmless.... And this is what pornography can be like. If we yield to it, we are feeding a very hungry plant that cannot ever be satisfied.

And that's what makes pornography a very dangerous plant to grow.. Because it is sadly very hard to get rid of and many people give up and leave Bamboo plants of pornography growing in the backyards of their hearts, hoping if they try keep them hidden, no-one will know and life will continue on as normal.. But it's not so easy. In order to keep them hidden, you'll have to stop people from looking in your backyard and you'll end up telling a lot of lies to keep things hidden. (Deleting history off your computer, hiding magazines, etc) but this becomes burdensome and the guilt trips of lying and hiding things becomes too much. And soon enough the plant you are feeding will grow into a huge monster and even the neighbours will be able to see it. As the Bible says "what's in the heart of man comes out" and if we are serving Satan, we cannot serve God at the same time. The Bible says, "Either we'll love the one and hate the other" and we need to be careful what we yield the members of our body too. The Bible says - "neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness but yield yourselves unto God.." and if we do choose to yield to the flesh - look out as the Bible says "Be not deceived God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" and "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap destruction" because if we sow to the flesh, we quench the Spirit of God and grieve the Holy Spirit.. (1 Thess 5:19, Eph 4:30) And Satan is a cruel task master, the Bible says "The devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour"... He will always tell you sin is free, fun and easy when he first entices you but once you are hooked, you soon see, there is a huge price to pay for sin..

#### **My husband and I know first hand the destructiveness of pornography as we nearly lost our marriage over it... and if it wasn't for God we would have. Our story starts like this...**

We have now been married for over 16 years and before we were married, we were both druggies until God got a hold of us and turned us around. Once we decided to follow God, we were very careful not to allow the world into our home and cut off our old life and things that appealed to our flesh. We threw out our worldly music and movies and even threw out our T.V. We made a lot of changes and made sure we kept in Godly company and reading the Word of God. But after about 9 years of marriage, Satan started to attack our marriage - and I didn't even know about this at the time. My husband had been working in a worldly work place for a few years and there was pornographic material here and there on the walls, which meant he had to constantly contend with the battle of lust as most men do. But when things really got hard for him was when we one day borrowed a video player from a worldly friend as we wanted to watch a Christian video. But little did we know that inside the machine was a pornographic video.

I was in another room at the time when my husband unknowingly pushed play on the machine. Straight away Satan was working on his flesh... He watched it for a few minutes until I walked into the room and then he quickly turned it off. When I looked at him, I could see guilt written on his face and I asked what was wrong. He ended up telling me about the video as he had never lied to me before but when I asked if he had watched any of it, he didn't want to tell me and said "no". But as the story kept changing, I kept asking him if he had told me the truth and eventually it came out that he hadn't been honest and he had watched more than he said. Now even though he confessed and apologised, the problem didn't stop there... The seed of lust had been planted in his heart... And it wasn't hard to do as there had already been a pornography plant in his heart in his youth before he was a Christian. And even though the tree had been chopped down, some of the roots were still

there... He had been battling lustful temptations for years in the workplace and now, things only got harder for him. It was like the plant was starting to grow again.

As a young boy, my husband had not been brought up in a Christian home and had been exposed to pornographic videos and magazines (which sadly a lot of children are)... Such exposure did a lot of damage to him as it perverts a child's thoughts and puts pictures, thoughts and feelings in the heart right at a crucial age of when a child is developing into the person they will be for life... in character, habits, personality etc..

Anyway, this small exposure to pornography was enough to rekindle wrong thoughts and feelings and create in him a hunger to feed on it again. Just like I said - it is very addictive. He had never lied to me until this point but over the next year after that, he started to develop more deceit and occasionally looked up things on the internet while I was out (maybe every 6 months but that was enough to keep him feeding the destructive plant of pornography) And even though I didn't find out about his struggles until years later. I knew something was not right with him... It was in this year that I noticed my husband went down hill spiritually and became more selfish, angry, moody and introverted. He lost his zeal in witnessing and bible reading and got more into computer games and feeding the flesh. Although we were still strong church goers and still loved the Lord, my husband was definitely struggling and went up and down a lot. On fire for God one month and then struggling the next. He didn't even know why he struggled so much and never realised his battle with pornography was enough to keep him stagnant. As each time he would fall, he would repent and ask God to forgive him and then think he'd be OK. But then he'd fall again a bit down the track. And the whole time, he had no idea how much his sin was effecting our whole family. Not just physically (as when you feed lust, it effects your relationship with your spouse in intimacy too) but also in the spiritual realm. In the year my husband started to struggle with lust, I started to suffer with severe depression. I had young children and was pregnant too and used to get up every morning at 5.30 to read my bible and pray for an hour before the kids got up so I could cope with my day. But no matter what I did, I couldn't lift the black cloud that sat upon me. I also felt more insecure than I had ever felt before in our marriage. I believe women have an intuition and inner sense about things but can't always put their finger on it. So suddenly I felt insecure about him working with other women. I knew there was a pretty secretary at his work and I felt threatened by her. At times he would come home and criticise how I looked - i.e. no make up etc and I felt I was being compared. This really hurt but in looking back I can now see, this depressing, insecure time of our marriage was completely due to my husband letting Satan into his life and into our home and into our marriage. Husbands are the head of the house and they hold the umbrella of spiritual protection over the family and if they are allowing Satan to throw fiery darts into their life, they are also allowing holes in the umbrella of protection over the family and these fiery darts also come down upon the children as well.

So once he had fallen into looking at pornography a few times, he was hooked. And it didn't take long for him to really struggle with other things like lustful dreams and struggle more with looks of lust towards other women etc. I know men can struggle with these kinds of things and we talked about it but he just made me feel (and even believed himself) that it was totally normal and it wasn't till yrs later when he was free from his addiction that these struggles went away.. And at the time, he just thought as long as you're confessing and repenting, that's all you can do. And in looking back now, I really wish I had of asked him outright if he was having struggles with the internet but seeing it had never been an issue before, I never thought to ask. I believe if I had of asked him, his problem may have been stopped as I could have held him more accountable and asked him regularly how he was going. But because his problem was hidden from me (and everyone else) he had no reason to stop doing it - it wasn't hurting anyone,, so he thought !!!! So he was in a rut as the more times he fell, the more ashamed he felt and then all the more he didn't want to tell me. But by not telling me, the more sin he did- what a viscous circle.. And after trying to conquer his problem and failing too many times, he started to hate thinking about it... He couldn't handle the guilt and shame and empty feeling inside.. (and rather than come clean) he started trying to escape reality by feeding his flesh more. This is when a lot of people do drugs but seeing we were Christians, he just did more harmless things like buying new things all the time. Always a new gadget to try cheer himself up and try distract his thoughts. He started wanting to watch a lot more videos and his standards were dropping. He was hiring more M rated videos where-as normally we would never watch those. (as there is always swearing, rock music and immorality) I was getting more and more unhappy and always having "deep and meaningful" with him. He would always listen and agree and then sigh with despair at changing anything and then want to go to sleep so he could tune off from life and feeling convicted. Being awake was all too hard.

So as time went on, the chains got heavier and he even gave up on his desires to serve in the ministry. As a young Christian, he had felt called to preach and Pastors had noticed he had a gift and encouraged him to

pursue his gift and calling. At one point he even quit full time work to train and study for the ministry but this is when God really started working on him.. In order for him to give his life and heart fully to God for ministry, the truth would have to come out... But this terrified him as Satan had convinced him that if he ever told me the truth, I would leave him and never forgive him and he couldn't bear the thought of losing me or hurting me that much as we were Best Friends... and he had never lied to me about anything else before.. He couldn't bear bringing that much pain and turbulence into our marriage and in his character, he wasn't confrontational and hated emotional drama so decided he would take his secrets and struggles to the grave.... But it is true as the Bible says "Your sin shall find you out" and "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound, God forbid". You cannot hide your Bamboo trees forever... it was still in the back yard and still demanding to be fed and still continuing to grow.. And after years of fighting and failing, fighting and failing, God blew the fence away and exposed the whole tree, roots and all... The roots had destructively grown throughout our whole back yard and everything was ripped up and destroyed. In order to remove the tree, we had to dig deep to get EVERY root out and this hurt a lot. Sadly if he had of confessed much earlier on - right back in the beginning, things would not have got so bad but that's what Satan does. He keeps things hidden so they get beyond repair... The way God brought things to the surface was when my husband ended up developing wrong thoughts and feelings for a very good friend of ours. Its easy for this to happen as you trust your closest friends sometimes too much.. Satan had plans to destroy our marriage but I praise God, my husband stopped himself and said - this is wrong and needs to stop and not long after that - God forced the truth to the surface. This was a very dark time in our marriage and I thought I'd never recover. The truth about his porn addiction didn't come out at this point. He couldn't bear to tell me seeing he had already hurt me SO much. My world just turned upside down and I felt like someone had ripped my heart out, cut it up in tiny pieces and thrown it into the sea. It felt like it could never be put back together again. I felt like screaming and never stopping. I was so angry. All the love, trust and happy memories we had together felt like it meant NOTHING and I didn't believe he could love me and do this.. I became an insecure mess and at first I wanted to run away but I knew this was not the answer. I did not want my children to know what had happened and I did not want to be a bad testimony to the people that were not saved and watching us. I was in the process of discipling someone and if God wasn't big enough to help me in my problems, what was I teaching my children and what sort of a testimony was that to the younger Christians all around me.

The reality was, I knew God had allowed this to happen in our life and I knew he could get us through it... But questions like - "how long will it take to recover ?" and "will I ever be the same again ?" and "How will I ever trust and forgive my husband.?" kept coming to mind but I felt lost and powerless to answer them. Every Scripture that came to mind would torment me, and I would whip myself with scripture telling myself I was so unspiritual for feeling this way. As scripture says there is victory in Christ to forgive etc. But how do you forgive when your hurting so bad and feeling so betrayed??? Scriptures like "All things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose" would keep hounding me and then the old favourite "Give thanks in all things for this is the will of God" would really dig deep and hurt.. How could I give thanks for this??? And how in the world could any of this be working towards anything good??? I felt so angry..... My husband was my best friend and it didn't seem fair.. The sadness was so awful - it felt like I was grieving the death of my marriage and I longed for it to be a bad dream but knew it wasn't.. How was it that he was the one who had committed the sin but now it felt like I was the one in the limelight with all the problems. How did I go from being the innocent party to the guilty one I knew God was revealing sin in my heart like anger and unforgiveness etc but why did he have to show me like this... and whenever they sang the song at church - "Oh rejoice in the Lord, he makes no mistakes, for he knoweth the end of each path that I take.. for when I am tried and purified, I shall come forth as Gold." I would just cry...

So who do I talk to and who would understand??? I felt so alone.... And each day I would try work through my feelings and thoughts and try encourage myself that grieving is normal and I am only human. I didn't know how long it would take to recover so I gave myself a year to work through everything and then tried to stop whipping myself and expecting things to be better when they weren't going to be for awhile. And it was true... after about 8 months, the crying was getting less and the anger was not as consuming and I was starting to feel like there was a light at the end of the tunnel.. But things were still not right with my husband. He was not as humble as I thought someone should be after God had brought them low... and one day when I was sitting in a sermon at church, the pastor said - when someone falls into very big sin, it doesn't just happen overnight, the heart will be backsliding inside long before we see them outwardly fall. And even though I had heard this concept before it was like the lights turned on when he said it. I knew my husband had more to tell me and so that night I plucked up the courage to ask him if he had really told me everything as he had promised.. There was a deathly silence and I felt the blood drain through my body. And out came the truth about his long battle with pornography and the deceitful life he had been living. I couldn't bear it. More lies, more betrayal. I was so hurt that for all these years that he was saying he loved me and I felt so close to him, that now it all felt

like nothing. I was shattered. The thoughts of him looking at other women naked enraged me and made me feel sick and violated. I felt worthless and ashamed. Just knowing he had been looking at beautiful, tanned, sexy women on the net and then looking at me made me feel so ugly... How could I compare to that. I felt so hurt. Didn't he know how much that would hurt me. Men just do not seem to understand why this hurts a woman so much and why it makes her feel so insecure and worthless. It feels like the act of adultery has been committed as for a man to look upon another woman naked and have sexual thoughts or desires toward her is really in all honesty - unfaithfulness.

So now finally ALL the truth was out.... After all those years of carrying all that sin and shame and guilt, my husband's confession had finally set him free. But guess what, guess who was now laden down with luggage... ME... It was like he had handed me a huge load of baggage and as the weight lifted off him, it fell onto me and I crumpled with the weight. It was too heavy for me to bear... I didn't know what to do with it and didn't know how to give it to the Lord as when you have been wounded deeply, your heart fills with emotions that make you hold the wounds close to your heart... And every time you try hand it to God in forgiveness and try let it go, as soon as a thought, feeling or memory comes to mind, you grab back that forgiveness and get angry again, holding offence against the person again.. So it takes time to let go and to be able to leave it with the Lord and not take it back again. Its like throwing a rock in a river, the ripples spread out for a very long way and take time to fade away. And one thing that really helped me was attending a counselling group. As I listened to the stories of other women who had been betrayed, my story seemed not as bad in comparison. I realised I could be thankful for many things. One that my husband was saved and very sorry about his sin.. And two that he genuinely wanted to change unlike the husbands of many of these ladies and some of them had been through way worse and still were going through way worse... So I realised I actually had things to be thankful for and found I was able to start to applying the scripture - Give thanks in all things. And as I saw God doing a genuine work of repentance in my husband, I saw the good that God was doing through it all and the good that he was working toward. And without me knowing it, this was the start of my healing and in time, the true work of forgiveness was able to be granted and not taken back again.

So after this next load of confessions it admittedly took us another 8 months to get over and work through. And my husband really helped my speedy recovery by allowing me time to grieve and even be angry at him at times. He just took it and never told me I had no right to be hurt or angry and never quoted scripture at me that I should forgive. He let me work through it and accepted his consequences as some things had to be changed in our life. I also begged him to please keep nothing back this time. I couldn't bear to think everything was fine and then another 8 months down the track be turned all upside down again.. I wanted it all out on the table and dealt with, as painful as it was, the truth is better known than not known. So he let me ask him lots of questions over and over again until I felt like I could trust his every answer and believe that he really was telling me the whole truth this time... He was very sensitive to my needs and to prove his honesty, he would confess every little thing he could think for months. He stopped wanting to sleep so much and started staying up all night thinking about things and asking God to reveal anything hidden in his heart.. I really knew he was a changed man when I saw these things...

So what we learned through all our trials was "accountability" is a huge key to getting free from addiction. Because even as Christians, we can so easily take Gods merciful character and long suffering forgiveness for granted and tend to continue in sin longer than we would if we had to confess our sin to a spouse or good friend or even our pastor.. As we know humans are not as forgiving and long suffering as God. And we know they will not always understand like God does. And the pure shame of telling someone else besides God helps to bring about change. Shame must not be avoided - it is apart of the process of admitting sin and facing the consequences. Shame is a good thing as it helps motivates us not to sin again. And without this, getting free from really addictive sin is very difficult. And that's why we believe accountability MUST be to someone who you are a little embarrassed or ashamed to confess to. As this then becomes a major motivator to not do it again and helps you change. For example if you tell a mate who struggles with the same sin, they will probably be very understanding but maybe too understanding and you will both feel totally comfortable in confessing failure to each other but not have the motivation to change. And that's why you need to confess to someone close who will hold you accountable with a passion to help you.. Secrets are dangerous as they keep you in the dark and what does the bible say about God. That he is al light and in him is NO darkness..... And "The TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"... AMEN.... and that's exactly why Satan hates us telling the truth.. it WILL set us free.. Even if it hurts or makes us feel ashamed, it will set us free. If we hide our sin, we only feel alone and feel like we are the only one... and while we feel like we are the only one failing, Satan will hound you with guilt and shame and keep you defeated and always in a rut of defeat.

And that's why it is so important to tell someone close (like a spouse or parent) about your struggles or failings... someone you trust. Even if the person will be hurt by knowing of your addiction, if they are your spouse or fiancé, they must know and have every right to know.. They will help you look at your sin more seriously. But if you don't know have a spouse or fiancé at least tell someone who will be very concerned about you spiritually, as they will help hold you accountable to change and get free. But be ready to battle. It won't be easy and this is the consequences of sin. Satan is a task master that will not let you go without a fight. He wants to own you and knows your weaknesses and will continue to work on you to try make you fall again... Giving up any addiction is not easy and especially ones that are easily fuelled by things in our life. We need to make big efforts to avoid things that cause us to stumble or entice us back to sin. Whether it be having access to an internet that isn't supervised... Or going to the beach and hanging out where everyone is wearing bathers and enticing you to lust. Or maybe it is being with people of the opposite sex unsupervised... We need to be also be more careful with what we watch on T.V or the movies we watch. There are many ways to feed the flesh and fall into temptation. If we know what causes us to fall, we need to be proactive in avoiding that sin or temptation in our life. If you want to chop down the tree, we need to cut out the roots as well and this takes work, time, a willing humble heart and most of - Gods help..

When God first created Adam and Eve, there was no sin in the world and the Bible says Adam and Eve walked naked with God and were not ashamed.

But if we notice, as soon as they disobeyed God and sinned they became suddenly aware they were naked and felt ashamed and hid themselves. And God then clothed them. So the picture here is that once man sinned there came a strong awareness of being naked and a strong sense of shame... Which is why God obviously clothed them. And we can see from other scriptures in the Bible that to show our nakedness to others (outside of marriage of course) is sinful and wrong. And this is because of mans sinful nature and strong propensity to fall into sinful lust and temptation.

Lev 18:6-19 clearly outlines that "we should not uncover the nakedness of anyone (outside of marriage) : mother, father, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, cousin or any woman or daughter " Which shows it is sin to look upon the nakedness of others and the only acceptable uncovering of nakedness is within marriage. As this is a union sanctified by God with the sole purpose of enriching marriage and childbearing... And just imagine if society followed Gods ways and kept the sharing of nakedness within marriage. Well then there would not be fornication, adultery, sodomy, children born outside of marriage, rape, abortions etc etc... Just imagine it!

But the world we live in today sadly does not live by God standards - (the Bible.) And therefore semi nakedness today is becoming more and more acceptable.. As moral standards get lower and lower, and wrong becomes more and more right in everyone's eyes. Therefore it is becoming harder and harder for today's generation to remain pure and undefiled before God.

There are many many areas of our life we can fall into lust. There is so much exposure on the T.V, internet, magazines, videos etc.. Even in the safety of our own homes, we only have to turn on the T.V to be bombarded by adverts and programmes that push sexuality or sensuality to sell something or just to rope you into watching their programme. And if we go for a drive to the shops, it's the same. We get bombarded by sexual advertising on the billboards or suggestive pictures and slogans. It seems sex sells everything!!! Go into any service station or newsagents and it seems every newspaper, catalogue or magazine has something to do with sex or nudity to sell it... Its no wonder the young people are experimenting with their sexuality as even the fashions promote sexuality... that covering up is not attractive or cool... and everything must be falling off, really tight or too small. And so everyone is dressing to be noticed but not a lot of consideration is given to what we are advertising about ourselves in our clothing.. If we dress provocatively, we will get noticed. But have you considered what you are being noticed for and what thoughts and feelings are you provoking in someone. If we are provoking and fostering sexual thoughts and feelings in someone, we are causing them to sin and struggle with temptation... and attracting someone to us for the wrong reasons. This is lust not love.. And the Bible says Matt 5:28 - That to look upon a woman to lust after her is to commit adultery in your heart" and so if we have caused someone to lust, we have cause them to sin and fall into temptation. And so we need to really look at what we wear and see if our clothing draws attention to wrong parts of our body... It is not fair to dress in a way that causes the opposite sex to think sexually about us or look at us and then say - " I can wear what I like - men should use self control and not look". Well the Bible says Romans 14:12-15 that we should not do anything to cause our brother to stumble or fall. And because we know lust is a problem for many people. And because we do not know who will struggle with lust, we should be careful not to use our freedoms in how we dress, act or talk to cause someone to fall into lust.

Young people today are targeted to experiment with sexuality and purity is sadly getting lost in our younger generation and the damage is long lasting and the consequences far worse than any young person realises.... Dabbling in sexual immorality effects us long into our marriages and adult life and this is the bit teenagers seem totally unaware of. Teens seemed fixed on living for today and having fun and not a lot of thought goes into how what we do today will effect us long into our adult life. If teenagers look around and try to decide what is right by what everyone else is doing and whether everyone seems to be having fun and turning out ok.. there is a temptation to follow suit. But if we look at what the Bible says "Comparing ourselves among ourselves, we are not wise" We will realise Gods secret to happiness and success is not following everyone else but following God. Just because "everyone is doing it" does not mean it is right. And just because everyone is doing it, does not mean everyone else does not get messed up by it.

Following the crowd will always take you away from God as following God requires walking a narrow pathway. One must be prepared to walk alone many times and be prepared to say No and walk the other way. When presented with sin, a little voice within your head often says - NO, I shouldn't but then there is the sinful side of us that pauses for a bit and tries to figure out if there is a way that we can sin just a little and maybe justify it or even get away with it.. The little voice might say "C'mon, its just a little bit of sin and surely a little bit wont hurt me.. " but that's the sad part of that little voice.. it doesn't tell you the truth. If you remember the little voice of Satan in the Garden of Eden that said to Eve when tempted to eat the fruit. "Thou shall not surely die and the fruit will make you wise" In this same way, Satan lies to us today.. We might not se the effects of sin straight away; it has a way of first roping us in and then slowly killing us...

All sin ultimately takes us further and further away from God...