

Helping Women Who Struggle with Pornography

Shepherds' Wives Conference 2026 - Martha Peace

I. Introduction

- A. I heard about one Pastor's wife who told a young woman seeking help for a pornography addiction, "That's ridiculous, only men are addicted to porn." Well, nothing could be further from the truth. Statistics are alarming about women's pornography use. The statistics vary, but it is clear that it is a "real and present danger" and getting worse.
- B. Crystal Renaud of "Dirty Girl Ministries" writes that it is common for women to think, "I thought I was the only one." And "...unlike for men, the addiction to porn in women is not as much about how it makes her feel physically, but how it meets her emotional needs."ⁱ
- C. Martha's counselee's testimony
- D. For this workshop, I want to do the following:
 - 1. Typical example of secular, Christian psychology helps.
 - 2. Counseling Phase One: Biblical Principles on Mortifying the flesh.
 - 3. Counseling Phase Two: Confession and accountability.
 - 4. Counseling Phase Three: What to do with the card-catalog of images/romance scenarios that come to mind.
 - 5. Counseling Phase Four: Dying to self and becoming consumed with the glory of God.
 - 6. Recommended and not recommended resources.

II. Transformations Treatment Centers (Secular with a "Christian" option [based on the medical model])

- A. "We know you are in pain. We can help."
- B. "Sexual addiction is a compulsive and escalating pattern of sexual behavior acted out despite negative consequences. their addiction."
- C. Basically they counsel two ways: "one on one counseling" [identify underlying issues that cause addiction] and "12 step meetings" [learn how to identify stressors or triggers].
- D. Christian option: Cloud and Townsend's *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to say No*; Christ centered 12 step process; Celebrate Recovery/Traditional 12 Step meeting; Inner Healing, Church, communion, baptism.

III. Biblical Counseling Phase One: Teach Biblical Principles on Mortifying the Flesh

To mortify the flesh means to discipline the natural desires and appetites of the physical body, so that they are our servants and not our masters.¹ Cor. 9:24-27; Romans 6:4-7; Romans 8:12-13ⁱⁱ

- A. Unmortified sin is against the whole design of the Gospel – as though Christ's sacrifice was intended to indulge us in sin, rather than redeem us from it. ⁱⁱⁱ 1 Cor. 6:18-20
- B. There is a ceaseless conflict in the saint between *indwelling* sin and *God's* grace. Gal. 5:17^{iv}
- C. Though risen with Christ – their life hid with Him in God – and certain to appear with Christ in glory, the saints are nevertheless exhorted to mortify their members which are upon the earth. Col. 3:1-5,8^v
- D. Unless the Holy Spirit puts forth His power in them there will be no true mortification. God gives us a new nature, strengthens us in the inner man, grants fresh supplies of grace from day to day, works in us a loathing of sin, a mourning over it, a turning from it, presses the claims of

Christ to us, brings up some precept or warning to our mind, seals promises upon our hearts, and moves us to pray. Romans 8:12-14^{vi}

- E. The believer is not passive in the work of mortification, but active. It must not be supposed that the Spirit will help us without our cooperation. Believers are required to set themselves seriously to the task. [then let not the lazy Christian imagine he will ever get the victory over his lusts.] Romans 8:13; 1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Corinthians 7:1^{vii}
- F. Believers are the agents in this work, yet they perform it by the strength of Another. The duty is theirs, but the success and the glory are His. He illuminates the understanding and makes us more sensible of indwelling sin. He makes the conscience more sensitive. He deepens our yearnings after purity. He works in us both to will and to do of God's good pleasure. Our business is to heed His convictions, to respond to His holy impulses, to implore His aid, to count upon His grace. Phil.2:12-13^{viii}

IV. **Phase Two: Repentance results in Confession and Accountability** [Repentance is a turning from sin and a willingness to do whatever it takes to change.]

- A. Encourage the counselee to make a full confession
 1. God *is* in the problem. Jay Adams
 2. This is a sin that is common to man and you are not the only one. 1 Cor. 10:13
 3. The Lord will help you and I will help you. Hebrews 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:14; Galatians 6:2
 4. Seeking counsel is very wise. Proverbs 12:15
 5. Do not promise to keep what they tell you a secret. Normally you would, but if it becomes a church discipline matter, then you would have to bring in other witnesses. I will tell our one elder over our counseling ministry. Another exception would be if they are suicidal, then their family needs to know and take appropriate action].
 6. Confess your sin to God and to the people you know that you have sinned against them personally because of it. 1 John 1:9; Matthew 5:23-24
 7. Admonish her to tell her husband, but not tell her the sordid details. For example, "I have been secretly looking at internet pornography and masturbating for the last four years. I have sinned against God and you. I have asked God to forgive me and now I am asking you to forgive me.
 8. Prepare her for what her husband *might* say: (1) I forgive you. Then she should simply say, "Thank you." (2) I do not forgive you. Then she should say, "I don't blame you, but if you ever decide that you will, please tell me." (3) Well, that was in the past so we won't talk about it now. Then she should take that as a "no, I won't tell you I forgive you" answer. She should reply, "I don't blame you for not saying, 'I forgive you', but if you come to the place where you can say it, please let me know
 9. If your counselee is opposed to confessing to her husband, then Heath Lambert's book *Finally Free* would help persuade her of the need for accountability.
 10. After she confesses to God and to her husband, her accountability partner needs to be someone other than her husband, someone who will not get their feelings hurt (as a personal affront) when she confesses, someone who it will be easy to tell the truth to because she knows it won't hurt their feelings.
- B. Make no provision for the flesh. Romans 13:14 That means smart phone, computer, I Pad, romance books (even Christian ones), severing any internet or face-to-face relationships,

blocking numbers; someone else has to have the password to her computer and at least for probably a year or two, be nearby when she is on the computer. Other provisions for the flesh could be certain music or alcohol.

C. Accountability will be a joy and relief to her that she is finally safe from easy exposure.

V. Phase Three: What to do with Pornographic/Romance images that come to mind.

- A. Each time, one of her favorite images or romantic scenarios come to mind, instruct her to pray and beg God to erase the image.
- B. Exhort her to ask God that she would forget so much so that she would not even be able to recall. At first, she possibly could be confessing this sin and praying 50 times a day.
- C. Have a “trigger-quick” response to the first scenes that flood into her mind. In a similar way, your counselee must memorize [what I am calling emergency] “pure thoughts” and prayer requests, so that when the thought comes, she will have so “disciplined herself for the purpose of godliness” that she will have an immediate righteous response. Brain storm with her on her typical thoughts and actions and then help her come up with pure, God-honoring thoughts. Romans 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-24, Phil. 4:8
- D. Homework - Say the following *pure* thoughts out loud several times a day until you can say or think them easily without looking.

PURE, GOD-HONORING THOUGHTS
“Lord, I am coming boldly to Your throne of grace because I need <i>Your</i> mercy and grace to help me <i>not</i> to sin against You.” Hebrews 4:16
“Lord, I know that You called me not in impurity but in holiness. Make me pure in my heart so that I might not sin against You.” 1Thes. 4:7
“Forgive me for this thought I just had. I know that since I asked You, You <i>are</i> faithful and just to forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9
“Lord, I want to set my mind on You and the things above, not on this earth. I am asking You to renew my mind so much that I cannot even remember my sinful thought.” Colossians 3:2
“Lord, may Your love constrain me.” 2 Cor. 5:14
“Thank You <i>so much</i> for helping me.
Bless the Lord, O my soul? O LORD my God, <i>You</i> are very great! Ps.104:1-2