

# Class #6: Sexual Sin: Pornography & Abuse

Providing biblical counsel for believers waging war with sexual sin or recovering from abuse.

Sunday, February 10, 2019 | Geoff Kirkland

You worship your way into porn & you must worship your way out of it (**DA Carson**).

Jesus said: If you don't fight lust you won't go to heaven" (Matt 5): The stakes are much higher than whether the world is blown up by a thousand bombs. If you don't fight lust, you won't go to heaven (1 Peter 2:11; Colossians 3:6; Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Hebrews 12:14) (**John Piper**).

Habits are like stones rolling downhill--the further they roll, the faster and more ungovernable is their course. Habits, like trees, are strengthened by age...so it is with habits: the older and stronger--the longer they have held possession, the harder they will be to cast out (**JC Ryle**).

"Never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States has so much indecent (and obscene) material been so easily accessible by so many minors in so many American homes with so few restrictions."

(**U.S. Department of Justice**)

In this area of sexual purity, understand the necessity of raw, honest accountability; lone rangers are DEAD rangers!

## ***Introduction***

God is not embarrassed by sex. Song of Songs is an entire book in the Bible dedicated to celebrating pure sex in marriage (Joshua Harris).

**Definition of LUST:** to want what you don't have and weren't meant to have *at that time*. LUST goes beyond attraction, an appreciation of beauty, or even a healthy desire for sex -- it makes these desires **MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOD**. Lust wants to go outside God's guidelines to find satisfaction (Joshua Harris).

Lust is a strong desire that rules a man's heart.

## ***The Epidemic***

- By 2015, mobile adult content and services are expected to reach \$2.8 billion per year, mobile adult subscriptions will reach nearly \$1 billion, and mobile adult video consumption on tablets will triple.
- 1 in 5 mobile searches are for pornography.
- 24% of smartphone owners admit to having pornographic material on their mobile handset.
- Pornography is prevalent everywhere today. In fact, one in eight online searches is for pornography. Because porn use thrives in secrecy, many church members are trapped in a cycle of sin and shame, thinking that they're the only ones facing this temptation.
- 51% of pastors say Internet pornography is a possible temptation.
- 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women say they are addicted to pornography.
- 75% of pastors do not make themselves accountable to anyone for their Internet use.
- 9 out of 10 boys were exposed to pornography before the age of 18.
- The first exposure to pornography among men is 12 years old.
- 71% of teens hide online behavior from their parents.
- 83% of boys and 57% of girls have seen group sex online.
- 69% of boys and 55% of girls have seen same-sex intercourse online.
- Today, 68% of young adult men and 18% of women use porn at least once every week. Another 17% and another 30% of women use porn 1-2 times per month. This means for 85% of young men and nearly half of young women, watching porn is at least a monthly activity.
- It is also becoming more common for young adults to make their own pornography. Nearly 1 in 5 of 18-24-year-olds have sent a sext (sexually explicit text message). This has become a predictor of sexual behavior. Students who have had sexual intercourse are five times more likely than virgins to be involved in sexting.

— stats from *CovenantEyes.com/PornStats*

## ***The Root Issue***

At the core of ALL sexual sin is a covetous heart -- one ruled by sensual, self-seeking greed (Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5). When you hurt, you are running from something you believe you do not deserve. Sexual pleasure is used as a way to compensate for difficulties or to lessen the pain and suffering. "Greed" will direct your heart to covet a sexual 'pain reliever' in the search for solace. (Dr. John Street).

In the most recent *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder - V* (American Psychiatric Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition), *pornography addiction* was **rejected** as a mental disorder. In other words, the mental health profession does not acknowledge pornography as an addiction or illness!

From Jay Adams

The phone rings. On the other end of the line is someone who has just had to deal with a congregation that has been racked with a case of pornography-involving their own preacher! The preacher who is speaking tells me a sad story of how his friend in the ministry has just lost his congregation over the

discovery of the fact that he has been engaging in pornographic activities for some years. How it came about is that his own teenage son found some materials that he had stashed away in a closet, and began indulging himself as well. Not content with that, he invited a couple of his friends to join him in this activity. One of them-an elder's son-told his parents, and then, well . . . you can imagine the outcome! Today the preacher is looking for a job outside of the church.

"What a deplorable situation," you say. "How could a preacher-of all people-become involved?" Be careful. There isn't a Christian anywhere who is immune to any sin in the Book. Just thank God for His grace if you haven't been tempted, or have had the strength to resist if you have. It could happen to you, to your husband or wife, to your child or to your preacher.

"But how do people become attracted to this sinful lifestyle and what can be done to prevent it?" There are many reasons why pornography may get a hold on someone, but we must keep in mind none of these reasons is a valid excuse. There is never an occasion for becoming a part of the porn scene. A believer may always resist sin if he is only willing to do so. So, in the end, to indulge in pornography is a choice that is made where one might have made the opposite one. Pornography is not an addiction, it is not something that overwhelms one so that he is helpless to resist, it is not a legitimate way in which to release sexual tensions or anything else. **It is sin.** And it can be construed as nothing else.

**RESOLVED, never to do anything that I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.**

—Jonathan Edwards

When did Jesus ever heal the “illness” of sexual immorality? Rather, He called for repentance and turning from sin. He told the woman caught in adultery, “From now on sin no more” (John 8:11) Regarding lust of the heart, the Lord said: “. . . but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:28).

The **HEART** is always the problem. Behavior can never be managed or controlled as long as the heart is held captive. External stimulants (like pornography) only reveal what already exists in the heart of man.

Remember, if sin is the problem, there is no human remedy; the only remedy for sin is Jesus Christ. (Ab Abercrombie, *Biblical Counseling Institute*).

**THEREFORE, porn at its root is a *heart* issue.**

While pornography is a problem, it is visible symptom of a self-centered and idolatrous **heart**. What the person truly needs is change of heart, for what guides and motivates the heart is what will change the actions. Heart change is the only real hope for transformation.

“The Bible is always about behavior, but it is never only about behavior. God’s indictment of human nature always gets below the surface into the “**heart**.” His gaze and Word expose the thoughts, intentions, desires, and fears that shape the entire way that we approach life. An immoral act—or fantasy behavior—is a sin in itself. But such behavior always arises from desires and beliefs that dethrone God. Whenever I do wrong, I am loving something besides God with all my **heart**, soul, mind, and might” (David Powlison).

Sexual "looking", whether we are looking at a real person, a digital one, or an imaginary one, is about greed. (Ed Welch)

Welch continues: What I “see” is what I want to possess. Porn is not about our vision. It is about our hearts. I am saying, *I WANT THAT AS MY OWN*, which is exactly what the picture promises. The person in the photograph wants to belong to you and you alone. Sexual "looking", whether we are looking at a real person, a digital one, or an imaginary one, is about greed. I want to accumulate for my own kingdom.

1. Porn wrecks your view of sex.
2. Porn wrecks your view of women.
3. Porn wrecks women’s view of themselves.
4. The porn industry abuses women.
5. Porn is a sin against your wife. If you’re not yet married, porn is a sin against your future wife.
6. Porn wrecks families.
7. Porn is enslaving.
8. Porn erodes your character.
9. Porn wastes your time, energy, and money.
10. Porn weakens your relationship with God.
11. Porn weakens your service.
12. God’s wrath is against people who use porn.

### **Those who indulge in pornography...**

1. Dishonor the glory of God (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)
2. Distort the beauty of sex (Genesis 2:18-25; Proverbs 5)
3. Defile the exclusivity of marriage (Ephesians 5:25-32)
4. Disobey the commands of Scripture (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:3)

**Guard from PORNOLESCENCE —**

So many young Christians have stunted their spiritual growth through what I call *pornoescence*. Pornescence is that period when a person is old enough and mature enough to know that pornography is wrong and that it exacts a heavy price, but too immature or too apathetic to do anything about it. Pornescence is that period where he feels the guilt of his sin, but still enjoys it too much to give it up. He may make the occasional plea for help, or install Covenant Eyes (but keep a workaround for when he's really burning up), or ask for an accountability partner. But he doesn't really want to stop. Not yet. She may phone a friend on occasion or plan to speak to one of the older women in the church, but in the end her internal shame weighs heavier than her desire for holiness. So she continues on, night after night (Tim Challies).

“The perversion of the sexual relationship is not accidental it is intentional. Our enemy the devil has taken this beautiful picture, this one flesh relationship and warped it in the most grotesque and sinful ways. In our western culture, sex sells everything—hamburgers, tires, beer, and hot wings only to name a few things.

When a [person] indulges in sexual immorality and impurity, [he] participates in destroying the image and picture of what God intends for the intimate act of sex. There is nothing righteous about pornography; it leads to perversions of mind and body. A desire for pornography reveals a heart that is not set upon glorifying God, but is instead set upon feeding the sinful lusts of the flesh, something Scripture commands us to abandon” (Julie Ganschow).

The fitting exhortation comes from David Powlison:

Sexual sin is one expression of a deeper war for the **heart's** loyalty and primary love. Learning to see more clearly is a crucial part of your sanctification journey. Teaching others to have eyes open to the deeper battles is a crucial part of wise pastoral ministry. Jesus Christ looks better and better the more we see what He is about. He is not simply in the business of cleaning up a few embarrassing moral blots. Deepening the battle deepens the significance of the Savior. He alone sees your **heart** accurately. He alone loves you well enough to make you love Him.

## ***Overcoming Porn***

If porn is a worship issue and if false worship is the problem, then I would propose then that **true worship** is the solution (Ernie Baker).

Encouragements for you as a Christian *waging the war with & battling* for sexual purity:

- ✓It is POSSIBLE to be pure
- ✓God's made the PROVISION for you to be Pure
- ✓You have the indwelling POWER of the Spirit to be pure
- ✓You have the sure PROMISE of lasting joy in being pure

- ✓Delight yourself in the PERFECT PERSON to ensure being pure
- ✓Hold to & hide within you the PERFECT WORD to be pure
- ✓IT IS POSSIBLE for the child of God to be pure.
- ✓YOU HAVE WHAT'S NEEDED to be sexually pure.

You do need more than Covenant Eyes and a weekly accountability time with men to be different. You need a change in your heart. You can try and remove porn's availability and eliminate your time alone, but for the rest of your life you'll seek immoral images as long as you desire it. The good news—the gospel—is that Jesus will change your desires as you trust him to forgive you and change you by his grace (**Heath Lambert**, *Association of Biblical Counselors*)

Therefore, here is help to those who are interested in giving up the sinful lifestyle of pornographic adultery understand that the basic biblical dynamic is available to them. It is simply this: **one must replace old sinful ways with new biblical ones**. Paul put it in terms of "putting off the old person" that one used to be before coming to faith in Christ and "putting on the new person" that he is now that he has done do (see Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:4,9-10) (Jay Adams).

**As a believer, you *can* break free from the 'bondage' of porn! It is possible!**

This wonderful and progressive change is given to you by Jesus in His forgiving and changing grace. As you continue to walk the grace-filled path away from pornography, you need to seek God's forgiveness and power to be different. Cry out to Jesus. Remember His death on the cross that purchases your forgiveness and your obedience. Believe in the blood of Jesus to pay for your sin, and then get busy fighting with the spiritual strength found only in the gospel (Heath Lambert).

The job of Satan and the world is to convince you that there is *NO HOPE*. Some of those who are so convinced were never believers to begin with; they are still part of the world. Yet some believers fall under the delusion that change and purity are hopeless endeavors; they have become persuaded that their pursuit of sanctification is useless... You begin to truly doubt that God has any permanent answers for change and purity. IN REFRESHING CONTRAST, Gods' Word is full of optimism for overcoming the obstinate obsession of sexual lust! ... But for you who desire real transformation, the Word of God and the gospel is key. You must go to battle against sexual lust with the attitude of a soldier -- but a soldier who recognizes his own inability to secure a victory. As a soldier, you must be willing to die to self to gain final freedom from sexual slavery. Only then will you realize the transforming grace of Jesus Christ that will bring the final conquest. (Dr John Street)

## **Fight! Fight! Fight! — The Battle Plan Is Here & You Must Exert All Effort to Slay It!**

### **PUT OFF SIN: Common Lies Men Believe in Times of Temptation<sup>1</sup>**

- “I will be the only one affected by this action. It doesn't directly affect anyone else.”
- “I will only do it this one time.
- “Since my wife doesn't satisfy me in this way, I need to satisfy myself.”
- “I'll just browse on the computer and see what happens.”
- “No one will ever find out.”
- “I'm going to do it anyway, so let me just get it over with.”
- “It's really not that big a deal.”
- “God is going to forgive me anyway.”
- “I can use a little break or relief.”
- “There might be something new I'll be missing out on or haven't seen yet.”

### **PUT ON CHRIST: Truths Men Must Believe in Times of Temptation**

- “My sin is against a holy God and it took the death of Christ to pay for it.” Ps. 51: 4; Rom. 5: 8– 10
- “Christ died so that I may live a life free from all sin and pursue holiness.” Rom. 6: 1; Eph. 5: 3; James 2: 10.
- “Sexual pleasure must come through my wife only.” Prov. 5: 19.
- “My marriage is not about me; it is about loving my wife as Christ loves the church.” 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5: 25.
- “Singleness is not about me; it is about glorifying God in my body.” 1 Thes. 4: 3– 5.
- “Sin cannot bring lasting pleasure; Christ brings true and lasting pleasure.” Heb 11: 24– 26
- “Flirting with sin leads to destruction; following Christ leads to life.” Prov. 5: 8; Prov. 7: 21– 23; 1 Cor. 6: 18
- “It is more satisfying to please my all-knowing Father than to secretly indulge my sin.” Num. 32: 23; Ps. 90: 8; Prov. 5: 21; Heb. 13: 4; Heb. 4: 12– 13.
- “Christ died and has given me his Spirit to resist all temptation.” Ezek. 36: 24– 32; 1 Cor. 10: 13; 1 Tim. 6: 11– 12; 2 Tim. 2: 22.
- “It took the death of the Son of God to free me of this sin.” Rom. 5: 8– 10.

**The Cost to the Local Church?** “What will be the cost to the church if young men continue to give themselves to pornography? The church will be weakened by young men who give so many of their best days to the worst purpose. The church will be weakened by future leaders who set themselves back by years or even decades by deliberately pursuing an addiction that consumes them. The church will be weakened by men who could be leaders, but who pursue pornography and never escape its clutches. The church will be weakened as an entire generation of young men

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Brian Croft, *Help! He's Struggling with Pornography*.

burden their pastors with constant counseling to escape a sin they wanted to pursue and an addiction they chose for themselves. The church will be weakened by families that are unstable because the husband has brought his love of pornography into his marriage. How many men could be serving in ministries, could be pastoring churches, could be training to preach, could be planting churches, except that they have given their strength to another? The cost is high. The consequences are fearsome" (Tim Challies).

## **6 KEY STRATEGIES FOR THE \*WAR\* FOR SEXUAL PURITY...**

1. **FIGHT** for purity (*FIGHT!*)
2. **FLEE** from temptation (*RUN!*)
3. **FOCUS** on Christ (*PURSUE!*)
4. **FEAR** God's Displeasure (*FEAR!*)
5. **FIXATE** on Heaven (*FOCUS*)
6. **FILL** your mind with Truth (*MEDITATE*)

## ***Biblical Texts to Strengthen & Shield You From Sexual Lust***

### **1. Ephesians 5**

**Ephesians 5:3-4** shows that sexual sin is really a gratitude issue.

they're not grateful & they want more. Discontent with where God has them, what God has given & they CRAVE MORE.

### **2. Genesis 39 - Joseph in Egypt**

Genesis 39 — Joseph in Egypt

the LORD'S PRESENCE with Joseph (1-6)

the SEXUAL OPPORTUNITY for Joseph (6b-7)

the GOD-SATISFIED CONVICTION of Joseph (8-9)

the CAREFUL INTENTIONALITY of Joseph (10)

the FALSE ACCUSATIONS against Joseph (11-18)

the RIGHTEOUS SUFFERING of Joseph (19-23)

### **3. Numbers 25 & 1 Corinthians 10 -- the Immorality at Peor**

NUMBERS 25 — the PEOR incident



the immorality  
the idolatry  
the indignation  
the execution

1 Cor 10:8 - don't act immorally, as they did, and 23,000 fell in one day.

#### **4. Philippians 3 — The “Anatomy of Immorality”**

Philippians 3:18-19 — the anatomy of immorality  
are enemies of the CROSS of Christ

1. end is destruction
2. their god is their desire
3. their glory is in their shame
4. they set their minds on earthly things

v.20-21 — the solution

#### **5. 1 Thessalonians 4 — Divine Deliverance from Sexual Sin**

1 Thess 4

1. God's will is for you to be HOLY (3a)
2. You must abstain from all immorality (3b)
3. Possess your own body with SELF CONTROL (4)
4. The pursuit of God & intimate knowledge of God is the solution (5)
5. Remember that God is the avenger (6)
6. Your election is not for fornication but for sanctification (7)
7. The Holy Spirit is your perfect & sufficient helper (8)

#### **6. 1 Peter 2 -- The Duty of Christians**

1 Peter 2:11-12 -

your calling (aliens/strangers)  
your conflict (wage war against the soul)  
your conduct  
your consideration

#### **7. 2 Peter 2 -- the Example of “Righteous Lot”**

## 2 Peter 2

1. Who Lot was (8a)
2. Where Lot lived (8b)
3. What Lot felt (8c)
4. What Lot saw (8d)
5. What God promises (9)
6. Who God judges (10)

## 8. Proverbs 7 - the Steps into Immorality

Prov 7:1-5 - Keep God's Words!

Prov 7:6-23 - Fear Sexual Sin!

Prov 7:24-27 - Keep God's Words!

### THE HIGHWAY TO HELL (the steps TOWARD immorality):

1. You're unthinking & unguarded (7)
2. You're beginning to walk where she is (8)
3. You're finally in contact with her in conversation (10a)
4. You're gripped by her physical beauty (10)
5. You're charmed by her outgoing charms (11-12)
6. You're seized & snatched by her touch (13)
7. You're justifying it b/c of her religious talk (14)
8. You're feeling wanted, needed, fulfilling (15)
9. You're drawn to the prepared bed (16-17)
10. You're summoned to COME & drink love all night (18)
11. You're confident no one will see you & catch you (19-20)
12. You're enticed by her persuasions (21)
13. You're following her like a dumb animal to death (22)
14. You're in for a bitter arrow to pierce thru your heart (23)
15. You're on the highway to hell (27)

Lust wants you to think that it can give you something that God *can't*.

The key to holiness is satisfaction in God and then pursuing God in Christ with a violent determination.

John Piper affirms this: "You must fight fire with fire. The fire of lust's pleasures MUST be fought with the fire of God's pleasures. If we try to fight the fire of lust with prohibitions and threats alone --- even the terrible warnings of Jesus --- we will fail. We MUST fight it with the massive promise of SUPERIOR HAPPINESS. We must swallow up the little flicker of lust's pleasure in the conflagration of holy satisfaction."

See also: Psalm 119:9; Prov 4:23; Prov 23:19; Proverbs 15:14; Psalm 101:3; 1 Cor 10:12; Eccl 9:9.

## ***Recovering from Sexual Sin***

It is not falling into water that drowns, but lying in it. It is not falling into sin that damns, but lying in it without repentance (Thomas Watson).

### **AFTER YOU'VE FALLEN, WHAT'S THE WAY BACK TO PURITY?**

1. Repent (Ps 51:1)
2. Receive Forgiveness (Ps 32:1; 1 John 1:9)
3. Refocus & Replace (Eph 4:22-24)
4. Request Help Daily (Eph 6:18-20)

A personal testimony from a pastor:

"If you think it stops when you get a little older, guess again. I stood by the deathbed of a man who was 78 years old and he was weeping. And I said, "Why are you weeping?" And he said, "Because I just want to tell you how tragic my life has been. I've been a Christian for I don't know, several decades and I've never been able to get a victory over pornography."

**Wow! 78 years old! Guard!**

1. Porn is bad because it cheapens what God calls good.  
*The "badness" of porn can only be explained when the goodness of sex is first celebrated.*
2. Porn is selfish; real sex is giving.
3. Porn bonds you to an image; sex bonds you to a person.
4. Porn is abusive; marital sex is nourishing.
5. Porn dishonors God; marital sex honors Him.

## ***Counseling Those Who Have Been Abused***

The human heart is rugged, full of stubborn crevices and caves carved out by years of sinful habits and practices. A good counselor is like the special forces soldier who knows how to use his deadliest weapon, God's Word, to make a surgical strike on the heart. He is well-trained in the covert operations of the enemy and understands his elusive techniques. This is not an easy war, because sexual desires are at home on the heart's battlefield. (Dr. John Street)

**DEFINITION of ABUSE**—ABUSE IS AN IMPROPER TREATMENT TOWARDS ANOTHER WHEN ONE ABUSES HIS NATURAL POWERS, PRIVILEGES, OR ADVANTAGES.

## ***The Real Issue of Abuse***

**James 4:1-2** - the root

**Proverbs 15:32-33; 16:32; 25:28** - control your spirit/body/actions

**2 Samuel 13** - the story of sexual abuse

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** - the plan & design for sexual purity

**Hebrews 10:32-39 (cf. Chap.11)** - endure even amidst severe hardship

The Bible teaches us that sexual abuse is ultimately spiritual abuse—it attacks us body and soul....Satan loves to feed our distrust of God by having those who ought to be trustworthy, betray us. He wants faith to look foolish.” (Bob Kelleman)

**SEXUAL ABUSE DISTORTS THE BEAUTY OF SEX.**

God intended humankind to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28) spreading divine image-bearers throughout his good world. This multiplying of offspring and exercising of dominion was to happen through the God-ordained sexual union between husband and wife (Gen 2:24-25).

God meant for sexual feelings, thoughts, and activity to be pleasurable and intimacy-building in marriage. In the Bible, sexual intimacy is also a reflection of unity and peace between man and woman. It is a picture of two becoming one. To be sure, this sexual union is to picture the intimacy we have with Christ.

How devastating that sinners take what God created as a beautiful act and distorted that beautiful act into selfish and violent acts of terror. But sin inverts mutual love and harmony into domination of and violence against each other. Sex, the very expression of human union and peace, becomes a weapon of power and control against others after the Fall.

*Sexual assault is uniquely devastating precisely because it distorts the foundational realities of what it means to be human: sexual expression is perverted and used for violence, intra-personal trust is shattered, and disgrace and shame are heaped on the victim. Sexual assault creates in the victim's mind a tragic and perverse linkage between sex, intimacy, and shame (Justin Holcomb).*

## ***Counseling The Hurting***

Christians need to understand the specific pain and suffering that comes from sexual assault so they can respond in ways that are **biblical, compassionate, and informed.**

“We want to obtain wise counsel from the divine Counselor through His Word which teaches us that grace is God's prescription for the disgrace of sexual abuse.” (Bob Kelleman)

**The devastation of sexual abuse: *the downward spiral***

- The Loss of **Faith**: The door of the heart bolted shut—fearing to ever trust anyone again.
- The Loss of **Hope**: The death of dreams—life seems to be killing our hopes and dreams.
- The Loss of **Peace**: The downcast eyes—portraying unrelenting shame.
- The Loss of **Love**: The torn robes of the king's child—feeling unlovable and unable to love.

We see this fourfold pattern from **Tamar** in 2 Samuel 13. This captures something of the 'black hole of the emptiness' that often result from sexual abuse. Satan loves to feed our distrust of God by having those who ought to be trustworthy, betray us. He wants faith to look foolish (Bob Kelleman).

**Can you picture it?** God is wooing us back to Himself, drawing us home to His holy and loving heart, to Christ our faithful Savior. All the while Satan is whispering, "You can't trust Him. You can't trust anyone. You can't even trust family! Don't be foolish. Trust only yourself!" Evil wins the battle for our soul to the extent that we experience trust in others and view God as dangerous and foolish (Kelleman).

If sexual assault is a sin, then God opposes it passionately. And if it is sin, then God's redemption can overcome the effects and devastating hurt that result from such sins.

Seeking help and hope from the past sexual abuse:

- Journey One: Sustaining **Faith**—Developing trust in the midst of doubt by learning to trust again.
- Journey Two: Healing **Hope**—Clinging to the goodness of God in the midst of the badness of life.
- Journey Three: Reconciling **Peace**—Receiving Christ's grace in the midst of our disgrace.
- Journey Four: Guiding **Love**—Offering beauty in the midst of ashes.

### **Remind the Counselee of the "New Identity *In Christ*"<sup>2</sup>**

1. The person who has been sexually abused needs the gospel.
2. Avoid the term "victim." (2 Cor. 5:17-18; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; 2 Cor. 11:30)
3. The Christian counselee must receive the love of God. (Rom. 8:28-39)
4. The counselee must see the grace of God. (Rom. 6:23)
5. The Christian counselee must receive the honor Christ gives. (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
6. The Christian counselee must cultivate the mind of Christ. (Phil. 3:8-11)
7. The Christian counselee can "put the past in its place." (Phil. 3:13-14; Rev. 21:5)
8. The Christian counselee can be victorious. (2 Cor. 4:7-10)
9. The formerly abused person can become a servant to others. (Gen. 50:20; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 1 Pet. 4:10)

---

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Caroline Newheiser, *Counseling Sexually Abused Women and Children* notes.

## ***Some Homework Assignments***

### **1. Learn from Joseph. Read about Joseph's life in Genesis 37–50.**

What parallels exist between what happened to Joseph and what has happened to you?  
How did Joseph overcome the temptation to vengeance & bitterness? How was Joseph able to forgive his brothers?

In what specific ways can you follow Joseph's example in your life? How can you bless those who have hurt you?

### **2. Read Psalm 10.**

How does the knowledge of God's omniscience (knowing everything) and justice comfort you?  
Write out your own paraphrase of Psalm 10 in light of your own situation.

### **3. Read Hebrews 4:14–16.**

Why is Christ fully able to sympathize with you? How was his suffering greater than your suffering?

How is Jesus able to help you in your suffering?

### **4. Read 1 Peter 2:23–25; 3:18.**

What kinds of abuse did Jesus suffer? How did he respond to those who abused him? Why did he suffer?

Have you been reconciled (brought back) to God through repentant faith in Christ?

The one who has been abused, or is still being abused, has many needs. Protection, safety, and defense are some of the practical needs that must be met as a result of God's command to love our neighbor as we already love ourselves. However there is a need—the need—that is greatest of all. The deepest need of all is a soul-need, a need that can only be met by the one who is the Lover of our Souls. The need of the soul is to find rest and security in the One who knows all of their sufferings and cares deeply for them. They need to know the One who is working out His larger, redemptive purposes while at the same time deeply caring about them as individual sufferers living in a sinful world. . . . Is there someone who understands all of the trouble and the pain of abuse? Yes. Is there someone who will come to the aid of those who suffer? Yes. "Consider Jesus," the Bible says. For He is a merciful High Priest who delights to intercede for broken sinners! —Paul Tautges

## ***Conclusion***

### **REMEMBER THE POWER OF GRACE!**

"God's powerful grace forgives and it also gives. God's powerful grace also gives us strength to live in new ways. Forgiving grace is wonderful and essential, but sinners need more than forgiveness. It's not enough that our record of debt is paid; we also need grace to live like Jesus; we need grace that changes us so we can be like him in his holiness and love" (Heath Lambert).

"You are never in a pit so deep that the grace of Jesus cannot lift you out. [And] there is no porn user so enslaved that Jesus cannot set him or her free. There is no struggle for purity so intense that Jesus' grace cannot win the battle. Jesus' grace to change you is stronger than pornography's power to destroy you" (Heath Lambert).