

Sexual Addiction

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

Of Leopards and People . . .

“A leopard can’t change its spots.” This old cliché is true of leopards, but is it also true of people? Particularly those with sexually spotted lives? Many a man has been told, “You’ll never change.” Many women hear, “You are a bad seed.” Do you think it’s impossible for people to change . . . or perhaps that you can’t change? The Bible says, “*With God all things are possible*” (Matthew 19:26). Even if you feel that your mind and your heart are defiled, remember that God is a Redeemer—He is your Deliverer!

*“You have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling;
I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.”*
(Psalm 116:8–9)

Q: “Can those who have been caught in the snare of sexual addiction be set free?”

Yes! God’s Word gives absolute assurance that anyone can be set free.

*“My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.”*
(Psalm 25:15)

Q: “Although I am a Christian, I still have a problem with lust. Now that I know God loves me and has given me eternal life, having these desires makes me feel even worse. Why do I keep wanting to do these things that I know are wrong?”

Paul spoke to this very problem in Romans 7:21–24 when he said, “*I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*” Paul goes on to answer his own question by saying the answer is Jesus—relying on the Spirit of Christ, who lives within you, to be your source of power for change (verse 25). If you have accepted Christ to be your Lord and Savior, He will give you His divine power to overcome sin.

*“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,
if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.”*
(Romans 8:9)

The Spiral of Sexual Addiction

- **Curiosity:** A seemingly harmless temptation to look at sexual objects. (James 1:14)
- **Addiction:** A recurring stimulus in the brain. When a person experiences significant stimulation, the hormone epinephrine is secreted into the blood stream by the adrenal gland. Epinephrine stamps emotional memories into the brain. These memories continue to surface regardless of the person's desire to forget. (Galatians 6:7)
- **Compulsive Masturbation:** A response of sexual self-comfort to relieve the arousal. This act becomes part of a sexual ritual. (1 Corinthians 6:12)
- **Escalation:** The need for more shocking and explicit sexuality in order to be stimulated. (Ephesians 4:19)
- **Desensitization:** The shocking becomes acceptable and unstimulating. (Jeremiah 6:15)
- **Acting Out:** A compulsion to act out what has been seen and imagined because the visual experience is no longer satisfying in itself. (Galatians 5:19)
- **Despair:** Utter disgust over the behavior and utter hopelessness to change. (Romans 7:15)

*"Whatever overcomes a person,
to that he is enslaved."
(2 Peter 2:19)*

Key Verse to Memorize

*"Flee from sexual immorality.
Every other sin a person commits
is outside the body, but the sexually
immoral person sins against
his own body."
(1 Corinthians 6:18)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

1 Thessalonians chapter 4

Cracking the Code with the Freedom Formula

- **Don't** focus on the negative combination. Living under the "law" never changes you. If you focus only on what you shouldn't do, you will be pulled more powerfully to do it. (1 Corinthians 15:56)
 - "I need to quit thinking about sex."
 - "I won't rent X-rated movies."
 - "I have to get over this addiction."
 - "I shouldn't call the sex line."
 - "I'll quit cruising next month."

Focus on the positive combination.

- **A New Purpose**— "I want to reflect the character of Christ through what I see and do." (Romans 8:29)
- **A New Priority**— "I will do whatever it takes to have a pure heart and a transformed life." (Romans 12:2)
- **A New Plan**— "I will rely on Christ's strength, not on my own." (Philippians 4:13)

The Doorway Out of Addiction

- **Decide** whether you really want to be set free. (1 Peter 1:13)
 - "Am I ready to take responsibility for my addiction?"
- **Dispel** the myth that you don't need help. (Psalm 51:10)
 - "I admit I'm out of control."
- **Deal** with the secret of child abuse. (Some say that over 80 percent of addicts were sexually abused, over 90 percent, emotionally abused.) (Matthew 18:15–16)
 - Talk with a friend
 - Let go of the secret.
- **Discern** the inner need you have tried to satisfy through sexual passion. (Psalm 51:6)
 - Your need for sacrificial love?
 - Your need for significance?
 - Your need for security?
- **Determine** to let Jesus meet your needs. (Philippians 4:19)
 - Ask Him to come into your life as your personal Lord and Savior.
- **Dedicate** your life to the Lord Jesus. (Luke 9:23–24)
 - Let Christ have absolute control.

*"He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."
(1 Thessalonians 5:24)*

The Pathway to Purity

Does the thought of purity seem impossible to you? Take heart. God would never call you to be pure without giving you all that you need to be pure.

Participate in an accountability group dealing with sex addictions. (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10)

Uphold boundary lines that must be off limits. (Proverbs 27:12)

Rid yourself, your home, and your work of all sexually addictive items. (Isaiah 1:16–17)

Incorporate the power of Christ daily when temptation overwhelms you. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Take on positive habits of discipline, such as exercise, sports, regular sleep, and new hobbies. (Proverbs 10:17)

Yield your mind to meditating on and memorizing Scripture. (James 1:21)

Related Topics . . .

- Adultery:
The Snare of an Affair
- Childhood Sexual Abuse:
The Secret Storm
- Homosexuality:
A Case of Mistaken Identity
- Sexual Integrity:
Balancing Your Passion with Purity
- Temptation:
Promise of Pleasure—Lured by a Lie

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For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Sexual Addiction:
The Way Out of the Web.

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For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).



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