

Freedom From Bondage *deliverance from hidden moral failure*

Growing up, I had the typical “Leave It to Beaver” family. Mom stayed at home and made sure dinner was on the table at 5:30 when Dad walked through the door. I had one brother, one sister, and everything I could ask for—loving parents, a warm home, and all my needs met. Church was the center of our social life, and we were there as often as the doors opened.

Somehow the most important thing I learned from this setting was that looking good on the outside was what really counted. The standard we measured everything by was, “What will people think?” **No one shared openly about past or present sins and struggles.** Thus, when I began to experience struggles and failures of my own, I didn’t dare tell anyone.

Becoming Enslaved to Lust

My bondage to lust began somewhere around age eight, when I was introduced to the world of pornography by some neighborhood boys. I had no idea of the slavery I was bringing into my life. Lust and masturbation crept into my life, and soon they began to control me.

I felt like the black sheep in the family. Here I was, the good church boy, caught up in a world driven by lust. On the outside, I continued to play the role of a typical, nice, churchgoing kid. On the inside, **I was getting deeper into bondage, yet I saw no way out.** How do you keep pretending everything is okay when you’re dying inside? Well, that’s it. You pretend! So pretend is what I did, and to my shame, I did it very well!

I hated the control lust had over me, yet because I kept it a secret, I gave it power. Every year at youth camp, I recommitted my life to God and vowed to stay pure. Within a few days, however, I always fell back into my sinful habits, feeling defeated and alone. It seemed that no one around me had any problems, and **I never had the courage to admit my lustful failures to others.** Thus, I continued to be a hypocrite and pretended that everything in my life was fine.

By the age of eighteen, I left home for college with lust in control of my life. It was not long before I found myself in an immoral relationship, although that was something I had vowed I would never do. Inside, I was tormented with guilt. Eventually the conflict raging in my conscience became too much for me to bear, and I broke off the relationship.

Experiencing Salvation and Grace

During this time, I was invited to a Bible Conference. It was there that my heart heard and finally understood Jesus’ prayer to the Father in John 17:3: *“This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.”* My heart was stirred by these words, and **I realized that I did not truly know Jesus.** That night I cried out to the Lord for salvation, and something changed within me. I was saved! After attending a church my entire life, I finally knew Jesus Christ as my Savior!

Soon after this experience I attended a [Basic Life Principles Seminar](#). There **I discovered how to break the bondage of pornography, masturbation, and lust through engrafting God's Word into my heart** and meditating on His truth. I began to grow strong in the Lord, and I became even more determined in my commitment to live a pure life.

After taking some time to grow in my relationship with the Lord, I joined a missionary group called Youth With A Mission. With the help of their discipleship training, I began to find even more victory in my life. By this time, pornography had become something of the past, and yet I still struggled with lust and masturbation.

After several years, God brought my sweet wife Jenny into my life. Following a Christ-centered friendship together, I asked her to marry me. We both vowed to stay pure for our wedding night. Because we both had immoral backgrounds, **we also decided to bring everything to the light before marriage** and tell each other about our past failures. We didn't want the enemy to ever be able to say to either of us, "If he or she only knew ..."

Relinquishing Control to the Enemy

There was one problem. When I shared my failures, **I was not one hundred percent honest and left out my most recent failures**. One of these failures was looking at pornography after having an argument with Jenny. I shared ninety percent of my failures with her, but I left out more recent failures.

It was easy to tell Jenny about my past, but how could I tell her that after such a prolonged period of purity and victory I had just fallen during our engagement? I convinced myself that since it was only once and we were not married yet, she didn't need to know. Besides, at this point it would only hurt her, right?

I had no idea that **I was setting myself up for years of failure and hiding and was letting Satan bind me with his chains**. For years to come, these "little" hidden things gave the enemy control in my life, and it eventually gave him control in the lives of those I loved the most.

Drawn Again Into Darkness

Marriage was wonderful, yet we also experienced the conflicts and pressures that every young couple faces. When conflicts arose, I tended to retreat into myself, and Jenny hated that. This withdrawal produced tension and stressed our relationship. Once during a very difficult time, I was out jogging in the neighborhood. I found a pornographic magazine lying in the middle of the road, and I fell to the temptation to look at it.

Afterward I felt guilty and asked the Lord to forgive me. Yet, once again, I did not tell Jenny. **I reasoned that I had received the Lord's forgiveness, and she didn't need to know**. Besides, it would only hurt her! But now I had another hidden secret—the enemy had another chain with which to bind me. I began to fall again into temptation, and once more I found myself

being drawn into the sinister bondage of lust. Satan continued to tempt me, and I continued to fall.

Because I hid my sin and lying, I had no ability to stand against the enemy when temptations came. Slowly, pornography crept back into my life. Each time I fell, I went through the same mental exercise. I begged God to forgive me and then tried to convince myself that Jenny didn't need to know about it. After all, it was just between myself and God, and knowing about my sin would only damage her.

When Jenny went away to visit family, I occasionally rented an R-rated movie. I had set high standards for my family by not allowing cable TV, Internet access, or any questionable movies in our home, but I believed my sin affected only myself and that I could handle it. I was such a hypocrite! On the outside, I looked like the perfect husband and father who had everything together, yet on the inside I was being destroyed by Satan. I knew my actions were wrong, and each time I failed, I swore it would be the last. However, **because I refused to bring my sins to the light and confess them to Jenny, I continued to fall.**

Eventually, I reached the point where I fell more often and guilt began to overwhelm me. This remorse caused me to withdraw from my wife. She sensed my reservation, and began to ask me questions: "Are you all right? Are you struggling with anything?" I continued to lie and insisted that everything was fine.

I reasoned that I wasn't someone who looked at pornography every day or every week. I just struggled from time to time, and I always repented. I felt I had everything under control. I could handle this, I thought.

Feeling Pressure from God

Whatever a man sows, he will reap! My hypocrisy kept me blind to God's truth, and I did not realize the implications of my sin. After thirteen years of hiding my lust from my wife, I was now about to reap the harvest of what I had been sowing during that time.

After delivering four healthy babies, Jenny experienced several miscarriages. Also, I began facing huge financial problems.

As we struggled with these difficulties and sorrows, people encouraged me to keep the faith, saying that everyone goes through trials. What they didn't realize was that my trials were self-inflicted. God was not going to allow me to continue to hide my sin. I had been hiding my battle with lust for thirteen years, and **God was bringing trials into my life in order to bring me to repentance.** He was trying to get my attention.

I didn't feel as close to the Lord as I had in the years before, and I felt disconnected from my wife. However, I truly didn't believe my problems had anything to do with my sin. In my mind, I was forgiven and that was all that mattered. I knew I didn't want this sin in my life, and I asked for God's forgiveness every time I fell. **I honestly wanted to be free—but I wasn't willing to humble myself by confessing my lust to Jenny.**

Due to the tremendous guilt I faced, I did what most guilty people do: I blamed someone else. Instead of seeing that God had His finger pointed right at me, I pointed my finger at Jenny. We went to marriage counseling, where we all agreed that I was a really nice guy and that Jenny had a lot of issues. Still, my guilt did not decrease.

Reaching A Turning Point

Only God and I knew how badly I wanted to be free. I craved to be liberated from the grasp of lust, but deep down in my heart, I didn't believe it was possible. By now I knew that **I could not resist temptation and gain victory**. I was bound and could not free myself; I knew the only possible way to freedom was from the Lord.

Finally, a turning point came at a conference in Knoxville, Tennessee, where I heard about crying out to the Lord for deliverance. Several thousand men, including me, were led in a cry to God to deliver us from lust. In retrospect, I now see that that this experience was the beginning of the greatest deliverance in my life.

Shortly after this conference, I attended a father and son camp in Michigan with my sons. While I was there, I spoke with a counselor about the bondage I was in. Even before I gave him any details, he encouraged me to cleanse my conscience and tell my wife the truth. I came home convinced that **confessing my sin to Jenny was the right thing to do, and I determined to come clean** and clear my conscience. However, things came up and I put it off.

During the next year, God began to open my eyes to rebellion in my life. I saw that I had a very rebellious heart that infiltrated every part of my life. I began to recognize it in my work; my relationships with my wife, kids, and friends; and even with God. Previously I had never seen myself as rebellious, because I could conform on the outside. But now **God began to open my eyes to my sin, and this realization crushed me**. I repented and asked God to help me weed out every area of rebellion in my life.

During this time, I had a new freedom in my life. My relationship with Jenny was the best it had been in fifteen years. I experienced tremendous freedom from lust and masturbation, and life was good. I concluded that even though **I hadn't followed through on my decision to clear my conscience by confessing my failures to Jenny**, I was still being blessed for just wanting to do the right thing.

Unfortunately, I continued to put off any confession to her. Even though I experienced temporary freedom during this time, I did not realize **my family was paying a high price as a result of my hidden sin**. Because I was still harboring my hidden sins, Satan was free to enter my family and begin to torment them.

Coming to a Time of Confession

Ten months later, life was still wonderful, but my guilt was pressing in on me. I knew **I could not live with the agony of unconfessed sin**. I had to do something. At a monthly men's

group I led for homeschooling fathers, I told them I had some hidden sins I needed to confess to my wife. I asked them to pray for me, and I went home determined to confess my sins to Jenny.

That night, I began to tell my moral failures to Jenny. Admitting my bondage to lust was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. I thought I would hyperventilate!

I began my confession to her by minimizing my sin. I hoped that it would be enough to ease my guilt and satisfy any curiosity Jenny might have about my failures. Forgive and forget, right? So, I confessed half-truths and made it seem like I really wasn't that bad. Years of hiding my sin had hardened me and had given Satan the opportunity to take control of a large part of my heart.

I had no idea how my confession would affect my wife. Jenny was shocked by my betrayal and devastated that I had brought this sin into our family. She realized that I had lied to her throughout our entire marriage, and she fell apart. My sin crushed the spirit of my wife and destroyed her trust in me.

Slowly, **my hardened heart began to see how my sin was affecting those other than myself, and I saw the intense grief and pain my sin had created.** I saw I had devastated my wife and destroyed the spirit of our marriage. I began to break.

The Cleansing Process

The next seven nights we slept very little. The Lord gave us Psalm 51:6: "*Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom*" As we came to understand that truth in our hearts was a prerequisite for gaining God's wisdom, **we realized there could no longer be any hidden sin kept from the Lord Jesus or from each other.** We set out to bring everything to the light and to not minimize any sin. We decided that we would tell every secret and confess every sin, no matter how small or unimportant it seemed.

We confessed our sins to the Lord and asked each other for forgiveness. Then we renounced the sin for what it was and asked God to take back the area of our hearts that we had given to the enemy. We asked Him to establish righteousness in its place, and if the sins were sensual or sexual, we asked God to break any soul ties that we had created with another person.

We repeated these steps over and over throughout the week. The Lord brought our failures to the light, and it was amazing to see all the forgotten sins we had pushed to the back of our minds that we could now resolve. Many times we were awakened in the middle of the night with a memory of another sin that needed to be dealt with. We dealt with it right away and did not put it off. **Even though it was very difficult, this process was bringing us tremendous freedom.**

Delivered from the Filth of Sin

On the seventh night of our seeking the Lord, I had the most vivid dream. I was standing in a bathroom of an old stone church. As I flushed the toilet, I noticed that it began to leak, and

filth was now all over the stone floor. It was so bad I had to tiptoe to the door to try to keep from getting wet. As I opened the door, someone or something on the other side slammed it shut, knocking me back inside. As I tried to open the door again, I felt an evil presence on the other side, holding the door shut. I was trapped inside with all the filth, and I could not get out. Making one last desperate push to open the door, I cried out, "Jesus!" Suddenly, the door swung open in my dream. It startled me, and I flew out of bed. Alarmed by my shout, Jenny woke up and saw me sitting up, shaking with fear.

I described the dream to Jenny and told her I had never experienced such an evil presence in my life. She asked if I knew what my dream meant, and I told her no. She then said, "I believe Jesus just set you free from your bondage. **You cried out to Jesus to deliver you, and He did!**" As we talked, God's peace began to come over me.

Working Through Painful Consequences

My wife and I have always kept our children involved in our lives. Therefore, with Mom crying so often and the two of us staying secluded in our room for most of a week, it didn't take long for them to know something was wrong. **I knew I had to take the next step and confess my failures to my children.**

The second hardest thing I've done was going to my children, confessing my sin to them, and asking for their forgiveness. This step broke me emotionally, and for the first time in thirty years I wept like a baby. They forgave me, and we all cried together.

I begged my children to learn from my mistakes and not to hide sin in their lives like I had. We went to each of them one by one and discovered that all of them were struggling with sexual dreams and thoughts of their own. During the time I was completely blinded by my sin, my kids were being tormented because of it. My oldest son even admitted to looking at pornography on the Internet at my office. All this happened during the year I was gaining victory over my sin, but was still afraid to come clean and confess it to my wife.

I cannot begin to express the pain I felt at seeing what my sin had done to my family. I discovered that Satan's ultimate goal for destruction is not the father of the family. Once the father has given Satan access to his family through unconfessed sin, he may even leave him alone and move on to destroy his family. This happened in my family during the year before I confessed, when I was enjoying freedom, but my family was being tormented.

To help each of our children find freedom and deliverance, we let each of them through the same steps that Jenny and I had gone through. **This cleansing process was the hardest time our family has ever been through.** However, it brought an incredible freedom and closeness between us. Finally, we could all share openly with each other!

Clearing My Conscience With Others

I desired to be fully broken over my sin, and I knew this would happen only by taking personal responsibility for my sin and making a full confession. As long as I continued to hide

my sin from others, my heart was prideful and unbroken. **I had lived as a hypocrite for years, and now it was time to be open and honest with those around me.** I told Jenny I was willing to put my testimony in the newspaper, if that's what it took to be free.

After confessing my sin and dealing with the consequences within my family, I called all the Christian leaders I had served under. I confessed to them my bondage to lust and asked for their forgiveness for hiding my sin. I told them I was willing to resign from my positions of leadership. However, they all insisted that I keep my position and said they would pray that God would be free to truly use me now that I was no longer in bondage. I also went to the men in the homeschooling fathers group and asked for their forgiveness.

I knew I had to seek my parents' forgiveness as well. I went to them and asked them to forgive me for my hypocrisy in hiding sin while I was under their authority. Acknowledging my weakness to them was very hard, but I knew it had to be done to fully break the bondage I was in.

After I came clean with my parents, they began to view my wife differently. Over the years, they would tend to blame Jenny for any struggles we were having. My confession placed responsibility for these problems where it belonged. In addition, our relationship with them completely changed and they began honoring our wishes regarding standards in different areas for our children, which they had sometimes ignored. Sadly, my dad died unexpectedly six months later. I thank the Lord for allowing me to ask for his forgiveness before he died.

The Blessings Found in Freedom

Today I am a changed man. **I cannot fully express to you the joy of living in freedom from the ugly grasp of lust that controlled me for so long.** I am no longer bound as a slave to Satan, and he can no longer torment my wife and kids. I am free!

After we came clean, God not only turned our business around, but He also allowed our competitor to close his door and send his customers and referrals to us. God also allowed Jenny to conceive and carry two successful pregnancies and blessed us with two beautiful daughters.

God has given us the opportunity us to share our testimony with thousands of others, and we have had the thrill of seeing Him use this story to help hundreds of others come to freedom. I was afraid to come clean because of what it would do to my reputation and ministry—now, God has blessed us with a ministry far larger than I ever imagined.

Praise to our Lord Jesus Christ for doing more than I could ever think or ask!