## Encouragement for Hurting Wives

**Help and Hope for Wives of Porn Addicts**

by Nancy Kaser

Sexual addictions of all kinds are becoming more widespread than ever before as the internet has made every form of perversion readily accessible and easily hidden. Like the pagan gods of old, pornography is an idol that eventually owns it’s worshippers and will take nothing less than ultimate human sacrifice.

Pornography use is an addiction, and like other addictions, it is a *choice.* Part of what initially makes pornography particularly enticing is the secrecy and the deception that accompanies its use. It’s exciting to do something wrong and get away with it. It’s exciting to anticipate getting to do it again. That thrill lessens after time, so it is then necessary to increase the seediness of the content and the wrongness of the acts. While viewing pornography, the brain responds with powerful chemical reactions and these become what the addict actually craves.

Like a heroin addict becomes a slave to the drug, porn users become slaves to their depraved brain chemicals, and their families are faced with the devastating consequences of their choices.

While I know pornography can be bondage that keeps both men and women in chains, I want to offer some encouragement to my dear sisters who are in the nightmare reality of a husband’s porn addiction.

Statistically, “Christian” men are not much different than the heathen world around us when it comes to pornography. This is a disgrace to our faith and a gross marring of the gospel and the power we have as believers in Christ to not continue in sin. When a wife discovers her husband has been spending time, attention, and money to watch perversion and satisfy his depraved lust, her world is flipped upside down. The individual circumstances vary, but the devastation brought to each home is universal.

**It’s not about you.** – One of the most common lies Satan speaks to women in your situation is to tell you that your husband’s porn addition is because you are not enough – you aren’t sexy enough, thin enough, busty or booty enough, available enough… And friends, that is a lie. Some husbands even use this as an excuse to justify their own sinful behavior. Whether it is your own insecurities, your husband’s projections, or your enemy’s whispers, your husband’s sin has nothing to do with you. He chose to chase his lust in direct rebellion to God’s commands and his own marriage vows. He is accountable for his own behavior. You are not responsible for his sin.

**It’s not fair.** – Your future is dependent on the choices your husband makes from now on. That’s a terrifying place to me. It’s not fair; it’s really, really not. But it’s where you are. He has put you in a place of extreme vulnerability, your world is flipped upside down, and it’s so so painful. That’s the consequence of your husband’s sin. He can’t restore to you what you have lost. It’s where you are and it’s not fair.

Realize you’re in good company though. Jesus knows exactly what it’s like to be deeply betrayed by those closest to Him. Your source of comfort isn’t in *fairness.* It is in the unshakable goodness of God. In spite of the unfair pain your husband has brought you, forgiveness and restoration are possible – that’s different than fairness, and even if the worst case scenario happens (whatever that may be for you), God will remain faithful and good – that’s better than fairness.

**Jesus is able to set captives free.** – The only hope for your husband is a real repentance and real faith. The power of the gospel brings deliverance and the ability to stop destructive sinful practices. It is impossible to be a true Jesus follower and remain in a pattern of habitual sin. If sinful patterns continue after a profession of faith, then that faith should be questioned, not the power of the gospel. God desires to set your husband free, and He is able to do so. Your husband needs to make sure he is actually born again, and then live in the newness of life that is found in Christ.

**Your marriage will never be the same.** – “Going back to normal” isn’t an option for you. “Normal” was a lie anyway. The reality is, his sin has life-impacting consequences. Your trust has been shattered. As lies are uncovered, and the depravity of his heart revealed, you will see him in a different light. That’s the awful reality. His pornography use has changed everything. It’s not okay, and you shouldn’t tolerate it, excuse it, or participate in it. The only way for this awful situation to be redeemed is for your husband to repent and walk with Jesus. If that happens, your marriage will never be the same, but it can then be what it should have been all along, which will be gloriously better than the “normal” you once had. That is what God wants to do for you and your husband.

**God is still good.** – Your husband’s sin is a result of his own rebellion against God. God has not failed, but your husband has. God knew about your husband’s sin all along, gave him ample opportunity and time to repent, and now He has allowed what was in darkness to be brought to light SO THAT your husband can get right with God and be restored to you. That is ultimately what God wants to do in this situation. That is His will for you and your husband. The gospel is enough to save your husband and restore your marriage. Your husband now has the choice to walk in the light, or go back to the darkness. God will not fail. Your husband might though. There’s a guarantee that God is for you and your marriage. Sadly, there is no guarantee that your husband will walk in the light. Rather than anchoring your heart in your husband’s professions of change, choose to put your hope in God’s unfailing love and provision for you, knowing He will never fail you. He will remain good.

**Don’t make any decisions about your future for several months.** – Genuine repentance will bring about genuine change. It takes time for changes to be permanent, and you will likely experience many extreme emotions in the coming weeks. Don’t make any plans, except to press into Jesus – the One who has not failed you, and will love you, provide for you, and cover you no matter what.

**Ideally, you need couples counseling.** Whether it’s through your church or a licensed professional, the fastest way to healing for sexual bondage is for a repentant husband and a hurting wife to seek godly counsel together. The best-case scenario is when a husband recognizes his sin, repents, gets right with God, and is held accountable to other godly men. A wife who sees her husband become a different man who obeys God and not his sinful appetites will learn to trust him again. It is absolutely possible for this to happen and

**Accountability is essential.** – The church is designed by God to be a support to those who are struggling. Accountability is essential for him to walk in victory and be the man God wants him to be. He needs a small community where he can share his struggle and hear truth spoken and see it lived out in men he respects. Men in your church or a professional counselor should develop a plan for checking in on him where he is held to high standards of integrity and purity.

**You can’t be his accountability partner**. If your husband tells you he lusted today, it’s going to hurt you, even if he’s repentant. There are things that your husband needs to share with a man who cannot be hurt by knowing his thoughts. Let him confess his sin and be counseled by another man who can speak to him like a man and not be wounded personally by his sin.

**You need community**–Having trusted people who know what has happened in your life and are able to counsel you through this painful season. If your husband refuses to get accountability or even admit he has a problem, seek community for yourself. See a counselor or share your pain with a trusted Christian friend – preferably an older Christian woman outside your normal circle.

**Porn addicts can’t serve in ministry.** – I have heard several stories of porn-addicted men actively involved in leadership at their churches while their wives silently sit next to them in church, or serve alongside them in children’s ministry. A porn addict should not be serving in any type of church leadership position until he repents and walks for a season in integrity. If your husband is addicted to porn, first gently but firmly warn him that if he doesn’t step down from ministry and get accountability for his addiction, then you will be letting the church know about his sin. This is not a manipulation tactic, but an act of love from a sister in Christ who truly desires to see her husband walk in integrity and for God’s church to not be led by hypocrites.

**Pornography *can be* grounds for separation.** Most men who use pornography believe it doesn’t “count” as sexual immorality, but every wife who has discovered her husband’s porn use feels that it does. Pornography is technically not having sex with another person physically, but Jesus Himself said that “if you lust after a woman in your heart, you have already committed adultery with her.” Therefore, according to Jesus, pornography is adultery in the heart. This is not the same as physical adultery, but it can eventually reach the same level of shattered trust and devastation that a physical affair can have. The repetitive, unrestrained, unrepented, habitual use of pornography is sexual immorality.

Notice I said “repetitive, unrestrained, unrepented, habitual use of pornography.” There is a huge difference between a man who gives in to the temptation to click on a suggestive website, looks, and then repents and gets right with God, and the man who pays for monthly internet subscriptions to porn sites and tells his wife to get over it when she protests. A man who brazenly chooses porn over his wife and has no remorse and no intention to change his perverse habits is an adulterer at heart. A wife is absolutely justified in separating from her husband as a consequence of her husband’s unrepentant sin.

**God is near to the broken-hearted. ­**­– He sees you. He understands your pain and is able to provide the wisdom you so desperately need. Pour out your heart to Him. Saturate yourself in the truth of scripture. Determine to trust Him. The Faithful One will be nothing but faithful to you.