

The Counseling Solutions Group, Inc.

Counseling Problems Project

I. The Problem: Masturbation/Pornography

II. Relevant Passages with Exegesis

1 Corinthians 7:9—Paul is giving one of the biblical reasons for marriage. He is teaching that having a sexual desire is not a sin. However, it is the misappropriation of this desire that is sinful. Thus, Paul says that it is better to marry than to burn with lustful passions. The word *burn* could also be rendered *burnt*, which is not talking about fire in a literal sense or the flames of hell. The verse, however, can be problematic for the counselor if he is dealing with a person who is being mastered by masturbation.

Marriage will not solve the problem until true repentance has taken place. A wife cannot satisfy a person who does not understand or practice biblical sexual activity. Typically the masturbator, who marries, will attempt to satisfy himself with both forms of sex, but the physical act with his wife will not be performed according to 1 Cor. 7:3-4 (see below). The root or heart problem must be taken care of.

1 Corinthians 7:3-4—Both husband and wife have a mutual obligation to each other. The physical relationship in the bedroom between the husband and wife is an application of the two greatest commandments given by Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40. We are commanded to love God and our neighbor primarily. If a person is having sex with his own desires being met, as his chief aim, then he is sinning against God and his wife. Another verse that is comparable to the Corinthian and Matthew texts is Ephesians 5:25-32. Here Paul is teaching the Ephesian husbands to love their wives the way

Christ loves His church. There is not a place in these texts for a person who masturbates to justify his sin.

1 Corinthians 6:12—The “all things” in this passage apparently does not apply to the things that Paul was condemning previously (1 Cor. 5:1ff; 6:11). The all things seem to be amoral, i.e. meats offered to idols. However you interpret “all things” does not change the principle that whenever you step outside a particular biblical paradigm by sinning; you are being mastered by the activity. For example, when a person chooses to masturbate he is willfully choosing to sin against God and the teaching that He lays out for sexual activity. We noted this in 1 Cor. 7:3-4; as we saw how masturbation is satisfying self, which is contrary to one of the purposes of the sexual relationship and, thus, it is sinful. Furthermore, when a man, for example, chooses to satisfy his sexual desires by himself; he is participating in a form of homosexuality, i.e. man satisfying man and this is also sinful. See Romans 1:26ff.

1 Corinthians 6:9—Paul is discussing, in the context of the passage, the issue of a brother taking another brother to law before the unrighteous. In verses 9 and 10 he elaborates on some of the possible character traits of unrighteous people. It is interesting in that out of the five types of habitual sinners listed in verse 9, four of them are related to sexual sin. *Fornication* is the umbrella sin for all sexual sin, i.e. masturbation, adultery, incest, bestiality. *Adultery* is a specific sexual sin concerning those who have sex outside their marriage bond. *Effeminate* is called “soft” or as the Syriac renders it, “corrupters”. It is also considered a male prostitute. *Abusers with mankind* are specifically homosexuals. When dealing with the sin of masturbation, typically this sin is long-standing in an individual’s life. For a male, it may begin at the

age of 12 or earlier. The counselor needs to gather lots of information regarding how long the person has been trapped in this sin and how frequent. He will also want to know if this person has been born again. The folks described in this verse are not and as Gill noted regarding their sin:

if not repented of, would show, that notwithstanding their profession, they were destitute of the grace of God, were unfit to be in the kingdom of God, in a Gospel church state here below, and would be shut out of the kingdom of heaven hereafter.

Robertson added this note:

This was plain talk to a city like Corinth. It is needed today. It is a solemn roll call of the damned even if some of their names are on the church roll in Corinth whether officers or ordinary members.

John 4:1ff—In this story we see Christ encountering the harlot at a well in Samaria. It is interesting to note that Jesus did not offer her a 12-step program to overcome her sexual worship. But He met her at her most important need. Her true need concerned her relationship with the Creator, which would permanently impact her thirst for worship. We note here that a person who is habituated into a life of sexual immorality is a person who is worshipping. We all are created to worship and because of our depravity (or as C. S. Lewis called it, the fatal flaw) we have a distorted view of true worship. Christ met the woman at the well at this point. He was not bashful about discussing her promiscuity, but His interest was to go beyond the presentation problem of fornication. As a counselor, we must also follow this pattern and seek to get into the performance problem, i.e. what are they doing? And even deeper as we seek out the pre-conditioning problem, i.e. what things have been going on in their life that has made sexual perversion a preference in their worship? And lastly, the pre-suppositional problem, i.e. what are the core beliefs that forms this person's theology?

Matthew 5:27-28—In this text, the heart is not the center of the blood circulation or the emotional part of man's nature. It is the inner man including the intellect, the affections, and the will. This word is common in the New Testament and should be carefully studied always. "It is from a root that means to quiver or palpitate. Jesus locates adultery in the...heart before the outward act."—Robertson. Typically when the heart is used, it is contrasted to the physical body. In this context Christ contrasts the heart to the eye. In one sense we see how the eye can influence the heart and in another sense we see how sin is not given life externally, but it begins in the immaterial part of man, i.e. the heart. In counseling it would be wise to remove anything that could be placed before the eye. Also it will be necessary to counsel the problem at its root, which is the heart. Christ went beyond the presentation problem in this text. However, He did deal with the externals as we see in the next verse as He presented a practical way to keep from falling by radical amputation.

Proverbs 5:20-22—The Lord ponders the way of a man. The word *ponder* is intensive or intentional and means to "weigh out". Being a participle indicates that it has continuity of action. Thus God seriously weighs out our actions over a period of time. The word *goings* means *tracks* like wagon tracks. It appears to be similar to Hebrews 4:13 where the writer said that "all things are open and naked" to God. When we sin, God knows all about it. These actions are not done in a corner or outside the scrutiny of God. However, a person who commits masturbation typically thinks he is doing so discreetly. He has a wrong view of God. Though he is hiding from the eyes of men, God sees in the dark and thinks for long periods of time upon such actions. Then He weighs

out the actions and the consequences will eventually be manifest to many. In a counseling situation it will be necessary to deal with this person's theology.

Romans 1:24-25—A part of the price for man's moral freedom is sadly laid out by the Apostle in this text. The people he is describing have already made the decision to desert God by their self-determination and self-indulgence. "The words 'gave them up' and 'gave them over' sound to us like clods on the coffin as God leaves men to work their own wicked will."—Robertson. God is not putting anything into them, but is leaving them to the pollution of their nature. By His withdrawing of providential restraints, He is giving them up to the judicial hardness that will come due to their persistence in habitual sin. The *giving them over* in this passage is not primarily permissive in that God lets them have their own way. Neither is it privative in that God withdraws His grace from them. It is punitive in that it is a consequence of idolatrous behavior. Sin always has consequences (Gal. 6:7). The word *uncleanness*, in a moral sense, speaks of the impurity of lustful, profligate living. It is not uncommon to see idolatry manifest itself in sexual lusts. It is also important to note that Paul uses the word *worship* in this text. Masturbation is sinful worship of the creature more than the Creator. It will be necessary to delve a little deeper into the worship issue in order to get at the true idol(s) that is in his heart.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27—Paul uses a metaphor that concerns an athletic event here. Perhaps Paul had been a spectator at some of these events. In verse 25 he uses the word *temperate*, which means to have self-control. The word is in the middle voice, as opposed to the passive or active. Thus, Paul is saying that self-control is not something that will happen to you in a passive sense. Neither is it done by you to someone else as

the active sense would suggest. But it is done to you, by you. This would be contrary to the “let go and let God” teaching. It is also contrary to Antinomianism, which teaches, “I’m saved and can do as I please”. The counselee has a responsibility to submit to God’s Word, allow the Holy Spirit to work in his heart, and *do* the things necessary to overcome this sin habit as he submits to the control of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 10:13—This is God’s masterful verse on hope. It is not unusual for a person to be habituated into this type of sin and have no hope whatsoever. It could be that he has been committing this sin for 20 or more years. Perhaps he began as a child, many years prior to salvation. His habit is unconscious, automatic, and comfortable. He got saved but cannot put-off this sinful habit and it dominates his thought life, crushes his spirit, and commands his actions. Perhaps he has tried everything imaginable except coming to a counselor and being more transparent than he has ever been before. In this scenario, it is essential that he is given hope first, foremost, and throughout the counseling process. Jay E. Adams’ booklet *Christ and Your Problems* is an excellent treatment of this text. He must know that God has an answer, his problem is not unique, and there is help for him specifically.

III. Instructional Outline on Masturbation

A. Is Masturbation a Sin?

1. There are no direct teachings which say masturbation is sin.
2. When there are no direct principles you must teach from the indirect.

B. Principles From Scripture

1. 1 Corinthians 7:9 teaches us that God created us with a sexual drive, but because of our fallenness, we have sinfully misapplied that which was good to that which is evil.
2. 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 teaches us that the proper use of sex is to satisfy your mate, not for your own self-gratification. Masturbation is self-gratification or sexual immorality.
3. 1 Corinthians 6:12 teaches that that which we have a habitual propensity to do is our master and any master other than Christ is bondage and sin.
4. 1 Corinthians 6:9 teaches that those who are habituated in a life of sexual immorality will not have a place in heaven.
5. John 4:1ff teaches that our behavior is a manifestation of our worship and our behavior gives clues as to what we worship.
6. Matthew 5:27-28 teaches us that the root of the problem is in the heart. We can get a pretty good idea of what is in the heart by examining the fruit of the body.
7. Proverbs 5:20-22 teaches us that God is intense and serious concerning the actions of our hearts. He can see where we hide and our sin leaves discoverable tracks.
8. Romans 1:24-25 teaches us that the consequences for sexual immorality will naturally flow from the action. All actions, whether good or bad, beget consequences.

9. 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 teaches us that we have a responsibility in our sanctification. God will provide His Word, His Spirit, His grace, but the counselee must be willing.

10. 1 Corinthians 10:13 teaches us that no problem is unique. There is hope in God and He is faithful in giving that hope to those who desire it.

C. Purpose of Sex

1. Procreation of a godly heritage – Malachi 2:15
2. Application of the second great commandment – 1 Corinthians 7:3-4
3. Protection from sinful temptation – 1 Corinthians 7:9

D. Presuppositions Before Counseling

1. Are you born again?
 - a. With any habituated sinful lifestyle, you cannot change without first being regenerated.
2. Do you want change or relief?
 - a. What is your motivation for counseling?
 - (1) Relief to get what you want or
 - (2) Changed into the image of Jesus Christ
3. Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to bring about godly change?
 - a. Accountability
 - b. Transparency
 - c. Submission to Counseling

E. The Counselees Responsibility

1. Reflection

- a. A complete examination of lifestyle.
 - (1) What do you do?
 - (2) When do you do it?
 - (3) What is involved?
 - (4) Go through the Moral Failure Worksheet for extensive data collecting regarding the physical aspects of this sin.

2. Repentance

- a. Repentance is conviction
- b. Repentance is confession
- c. Repentance is correction
- d. Repentance is complete when an alternate lifestyle is begun and maintained

3. Restructuring

- a. Blocks and Fans
 - (1) Specific things that must be done to keep from embracing this sin
 - 1a Get off the Internet
 - 1b Go home another way, rather than by the store where you can buy porn
 - 1c Change relationships that entice you to sin or think about sinning
 - (2) Specific things that must be done to put on righteousness
 - 1a Be honest with your wife
 - 1b Commit to counseling
 - 1c Have an accountability partner

1d Begin ministering to others

IV. Homework Assignments

A. Read: *Christ and Your Problems*—In Jay E. Adams' booklet on 1 Corinthians 10:13 the counselee will get a great perspective on the commonality of sin. It will be helpful for the counselee to know that "his sin" is not one that is outside the bounds of God's grace and His faithfulness in assisting the counselee to overcome. The counselee will highlight 10 principles mentioned in the booklet. As he works through the principles (using the Principle Format Sheet—see *attachment #1*) the counselee will begin making application of this particular Bible text to his personal life.

B. Moral Failure Worksheet—This worksheet (see *attachment #2*) will give the counselee an opportunity to examine his life from a "sexual" perspective. This is intended to be extensive data collecting in an intensive area, i.e. the presentation problem area of the counselee. It will also give the counselee an opportunity to confess each sin area to God and begin the "put-on" phase of the two-step process of change according to Ephesians 4:17-32.

C. JBC article: "*I was a Transsexual Male...*": A Testimony to the Grace of God—The counselee will continue his reading assignments with this Journal of Biblical Counseling article. The author of this article was habituated in deep sin. His testimony will not only be an encouragement where hope is needed, but it will be instructive in how to overcome sin. The counselee will highlight 15 principles from this article and begin working through the principle format form as he makes application to his own life.

D. JBC article: *Slaying the Dragon*—This article, authored by David Powlison, delves into the mind as it indulges in sexual fantasy. Powlison does a masterful job as he gives a glimpse of a Christian who is struggling with a habituated lifestyle of sin. The counselee will follow the same format as in the previous article by highlighting 15 principles using the format sheet.

E. Steps to Remain in Moral Freedom—This form (see *attachment #3*) will help the counselee to identify areas in his life that may be contributing to his sinful lifestyle. As a part of his restructuring, it will be necessary to examine his thought life, obedience to God’s Word, where and with whom he spends time with, the things in which he listens to, his response to moral temptation, and his relationship with his wife. For each area, on the Moral Freedom form, the counselee will identify five or more specific areas that need to change in his life in order to maintain a righteous disciplined lifestyle. Then, for each identified area, he will list a specific “put on” that he can implement immediately into his lifestyle.

F. Summaries

1. Continue to meet with your counselor for weekly sessions until you are habituated into a new lifestyle (Gal. 6:1-2).
2. Write out a one-page summary of each of these sessions.
 - a. This will further cement the material that was presented in the sessions.
 - b. It allows the counselor to see how well you are comprehending and applying the principles learned.
 - c. It will give the counselor a point of departure for the next session and also maintain continuity from session to session.

d. It will allow the counselor to see what needs to be reiterated.

e. It will give the counselee an opportunity to think of additional questions that he didn't think of during the session.

f. It will help to further create a discipline, which is typically a part of the problem with most sin habits.

G. Identifying and Resolving Strongholds—This worksheet (*attachment #4*) is designed to help the counselee in the practice of identifying sin areas in his life and take appropriate actions to overcome the specific sins. As he begins to restructure, regarding the sin of masturbation, he will also identify other sins that are related to his sexual immorality. (See *attachment #5*—Jay E. Adams' matrix Signs of Ten Common Problems regarding how sins are interrelated. These other sins might not be present, but it will give the counselor some possible areas to look at.) Adams lists blameshifting, depression, fear, guilt, and self pity as possibilities of other sins that can accompany sexual deviation. Along with these sins are accompanying signs that the counselor will want to be attentive to, i.e. lack of interest, avoidance, muscular tension, tiredness, shyness, sensitivity, suicidal, communication breakdown, sleeplessness, impotency, and anxiety. The counselor will want to assist the counselee in identifying these strongholds in order to alert him to possible blind spots in his daily deportment. It is possible that he is not aware of all of his sin habits, especially if it is a life-dominating sin.

H. Read: Trusting God and do the Workbook—This is Jerry Bridges' classic work that should enable the counselee to be strengthened in his faith. The core of the counselee's problem is a wrong view of God. By having a wrong view, he chooses to

worship and serve his depraved, creaturely, passions rather than God. Bridges book will assist him in his thinking about God. Hopefully he will discover that God is worthy of his worship and anything less than that will never satisfy. The accompanying workbook will be invaluable in getting the most from the text.

I. SMAC—using the following format, the counselee will begin an in-depth study of the biblical passages listed at the beginning of this project. The Holy Spirit works in conjunction with His Word. It will be necessary for the counselee to begin an intense study of God’s Word in order to overcome his life-dominating sin. For each sub-point below, write out two or three sentences:

1. **S** = What does this text **SAY** grammatically?
 - a. Understand each of the words and the logical flow of each sentence.
2. **M** = What did this text **MEAN** historically?
 - a. Understand the story of context behind it. Ask questions of the text.
 - b. Put yourself into the shoes of the writer and then those of the receivers.
 - c. What did the author mean when he wrote these words?
 - d. What did the recipients understand when they first read these words?
3. **A** = How does this text **APPLY** to me?
 - a. Does the text reveal:
 - (1) a truth for me to believe about God?
 - (2) a truth for me to believe about some other doctrine?
 - (3) a command for me to obey?
 - (4) a result of obedience or disobedience for me to remember?

- (5) a promise for me to claim, i.e. place my trust in when I make decisions?
- (6) a sin for me to confess to God and to someone else?
- (7) a pattern or example for me to follow?
- (8) something I should do for the sake of Christ, others, or myself?
- (9) something I should praise or thank God for?
- (10) something I should pray about for myself or for others?
- (11) something I should make a decision about?
- (12) a principle for me to follow for personal guidance?
- (13) a principle of wisdom to shape my thinking?

4. **C** = What will I do to **CHANGE** in response to this Bible text?

- a. Work to narrow it down to concrete actions, words, or thoughts.
- b. Where did I last fail to do this and where can I next practice this?
- c. Your plan should include a specific time and place if possible.
- d. Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to motivate, strengthen, and bless you.
- e. Tell someone else about the process the Lord is taking you through.

J. Read: *How to Say No to a Stubborn Habit*—Erwin Lutzer’s book is a classic on life-dominating sins. The counselee will need to read through it and identify 25 principles using the Principle Format Form in order to make specific application to his life. This book will help in the “put-on” phase of his repentance process.

Homework:

Write out ____ principles per chapter using the following format:

1. State the principle with page number.
2. What does the principle mean (generalization)?
3. What does it mean to me (personalization)?
4. Make a plan that is specific for your situation.

Here is an example from Ed Wheat's book *Love Life For Every Married Couple*:

1. Pg. 107—"To have a friend, you must be one."
2. A person cannot expect to have a circle of friends if he cuts himself off from those who are trying to get close to him by being unfriendly.
3. I must make it a practice to be friendly toward _____ even when there is friction between us. We will not let the sun go down on our wrath. This means there will not be any "carry-over" hostilities that we refuse to resolve. We will be friendly toward one another.
4. I will ask _____ at least 3 times a week if I have hurt _____ in any way and/or how can I better serve _____ as a friend. I will give _____ time to respond and work to create an environment where _____ will not be inhibited from helping me in my relationship with God and _____.

Attachment Number One

Moral Failure

List each moral violation that you participate in or had thoughts of in the past

Lust

-
-

Sexual Abuse

-
-

Pornography

-
-

Rape

-
-

Masturbation

-
-

Abortion –

-
-

Homosexuality

-
-

Bestiality

-
-

Defrauding (sexual arousal of another)

-
-

Prostitution

-
-

Premarital sexual relations

-
-

Topless/Nude bars

-
-

Adultery

-
-

Cyber Sex

-
-

Exposing oneself

-
-

Wife Swapping

-
-

Peeping Tom

-
-

Other

-
-

Attachment #2

Steps to Remain in Moral Freedom

1. Guard your thoughts and desires
Proverbs 7:25 *"Let not your heart turn aside to her ways."*
2. Obey God's Word and seek God's wisdom
Proverbs 7:1-5 *"That they may keep you from..."*
3. Do not spend time with a person who is immoral
Proverbs 5:8 *"Remove thy way far from her and come not near the door of her house."*
4. Never listen to the enticing statement of a person who is or wants to be involved
Proverbs 2:16, 5:3-5, 7:15, 17-21
*"With her fair speech she causeth him to yield."
"With the flattery of her lips she forced him."*
5. Flee when confronted with a moral temptation
1 Corinthians 6:18 *"Flee fornication."*

If Married

6. Rejoice in the spouse God has given and let him/her render due benevolence
Proverbs 5:15-18; 1 Corinthians 7:3-4
*"Rejoice with the wife of thy youth."
"Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife."*
7. Be intoxicated by his/her love
Proverbs 5:19 *"Be thou ravished always with her love."*

Identifying and Resolving Strongholds

“Bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ”

2 Corinthians 10:5 / James 4:7

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Masturbation | 7. Depression | 13. Anxiety |
| 2. Internet | 8. Fear | 14. Sleeplessness |
| 3. Magazines | 9. Guilt | 15. Communication Breakdown |
| 4. Other Women | 10. Self-Pity | 16. Sensitive, touchy, irritable |
| 5. Anger | 11. Suspicion | 17. Shyness |
| 6. Blameshifting | 12. Lies | 18. Apathy |

Temptation: Specific Problem Encountered	Satan’s Goal: Basic Area of Temptation	God’s Goal: Opposite Christlike Quality	Victory Over a Stronghold	
			Prayer	Scripture
<p>I walked into a convenience store today that had racks of porn magazines</p>	<p>The desire to look was strong because of my habit of sexual lust</p>	<p>To love my wife as Christ loves the church.</p> <p>I am commanded to flee youthful lusts, which I did. Also I purpose not to go into that particular store again. I also told my wife and counselor and they are holding me accountable regarding this particular temptation</p> <p>When I am tempted I purpose in my heart to seek out ways to minister to others, rather than indulge in self-absorbed, self-serving sin habits. Today I did...for...</p>	<p>1. I am a child of God...</p> <p>2. I renounce (resist) the desire to ...</p> <p>3. I choose to submit to God’s desire to ...</p>	<p>Rom. 10:9, 13, 17 John 3:7 Eph. 1:3-13 1 Cor. 5:17</p> <p>2 Tim. 2:22 1 Cor. 6:18 Job 31:1 Prov. 23:7</p> <p>Eph. 5:25 1 Cor. 7:3-4 Matt. 22:36-40</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Attachment #4 Adapted from BCC</p>

Problems										
Signs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Anger	Blame Shifting	Depression	Envy Jealousy	Fear	Guilt	Rebellion	Self Pity	Sexual Deviation	Organic Problem
Cross References	(2),(4) (5),(6) 7,(8)	1,(4) 6,8	2,(4) 6,8	1,(3) (5),8	(1),2 (4),6 (8)	(1),2 (3),5 (8)	1,2 6,8	1,(2) 3,4,5 6,(7)	(2),(3) 5,6,8	(3),(1)
Failure to do daily chores			•					(•)		•
Slackening of interest			•				•		•	•
Withdrawal, avoidance	•		•		•	•		(•)	(•)	•
Frequently asks why? Dwells on past			•	(•)		(•)		•		
Loneliness			•	(•)	(•)	(•)	(•)	•		
Disorder of person, in home, on job			•	(•)	•	•		•		•
Muscular tension	•	•			•	•	•	(•)	•	•
Dry mouth, clammy hands, heart palpitation					•	•				•
Tiredness	(•)	(•)	•	(•)	(•)	•	(•)	•	(•)	•
Shyness			(•)		•	•			(•)	
Blue, sad, tears	(•)		•	•	•	•		•		•
Sensitive, touchy, irritable	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bitterness	•	•	(•)	(•)		•	(•)	•		
Suicidal tendencies	•		•	•	•	•	(•)	•	(•)	?
Violence (verbal or physical)	•	(•)		(•)	•	•	•	(•)		•
Communication breakdown	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Immobility	(•)	(•)	•		•	•		•		•
Sleeplessness	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Loss of appetite (weight loss)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Excessive eating(weight gain)			•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Headaches	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•
Sexual impotency	•	(•)	•		•	•			•	(•)
Hallucinations										•
Anxiety	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bizarre behavior	(•)			(•)	•	•		•	•	•
Excuses, lies		•	•		•	•		•	•	
Trouble with people	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Suspicion				•	•	•		•	•	•
Ulcer	(•)	•			•	•		•	(•)	•
Colitis	•	(•)	(•)	•	•		•	•		•

Key: Numbers = Cross references to items listed across top of table (e.g., 1 = anger)

• = Probable presence of sign () = Possible presence of sign

Attachment #5