

Overcoming Masturbation

By Eugene Allen

Be assured that you CAN overcome masturbation. Many men and women have been successful and you can be also; if you are determined that it must be so. Determination is the first step. That is where we begin. You must decide that you will end this practice.

But it must be more than a hope or a wish, more than knowing that it is good for you. It must be actually a DECISION. If you truly make up your mind that you will overcome, then you will find the strength to resist any tendencies which you may have and any temptations which may come to you. Remember what Elijah told the people of Israel on Mount Carmel when faced with a choice of gods to serve:

1 Kings 18:21 - And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him."

Now, to say some practical things. Never forget that this journey **starts with a decision** but must be transformed by your relationship with Christ in order to be successful. To that end you must be deliberate and disciplined in your daily life choices:

1. Never touch the intimate parts of your body except during normal toilet process.
2. When you bathe, do not admire yourself in a mirror. Don't stand around and indulge narcissistic fantasies. You remember that Narcissus fell in love with his reflection but ended up falling into the pool and drowning. You don't want to run the risk of drowning in your own sinful thoughts and lusts. Stay away from the pool.
3. Avoid being alone as much as possible. Find good company and stay in this good company.
4. Never read pornographic material. 'Nuf said?
5. Avoid people, situations, pictures or reading materials that might create sexual excitement.
And what are these things:
TV
Movies
Catalogs
Magazines
Romance Novels
Some Science Fiction/Fantasy (Anne Rice, Marion Zimmer Bradley-The Darkover Novels)
6. Put wholesome thoughts into your mind at all times. Read good books - Church books, Scriptures, sermons. Make a daily habit of reading at least one chapter of scripture, preferably from one of the four gospels in the New Testament. The four gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - above anything else in the Bible can be helpful because of their uplifting qualities.

Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

7. Pray - pray daily. But when you pray, don't pray exclusively about this problem, for that will tend to keep it in your mind more than ever. Pray for faith, pray for understanding of the scriptures, pray for the missionaries, your friends, your families. Pray for the fruits of the spirit, which will strengthen you against temptation. Pray fervently and out loud when the temptations are the strongest.

8. Follow a program of vigorous daily exercise. These exercises reduce emotional tensions and depression and are absolutely basic to the solution of this problem. Double your physical activity when you feel stress increasing. Ok

guys, what about the gym? Are the other people that go to the gym temptations for you? How many times do you use the guys at the gym as fantasy food for masturbation? Do you really need to work out in a place that has such temptations? My advice to you if you have a problem at the gym is this - cancel your membership and find another way to work out.

9. When the temptation to masturbate is strong, yell "Stop! I rebuke this temptation in the powerful name of the Lord Jesus Christ to those thoughts as loudly as you can in your mind and then recite a pre-chosen Scripture or sing an inspirational hymn. It is important to turn your thoughts away from the selfish need to indulge and onto Jesus.

10. Set goals of abstinence, begin with a day, then a week, month, year, and finally commit to never doing it again. Until you commit yourself to never again you will always be open to temptation.

11. Set up a reward system for your successes. It does not have to be a big reward. A quarter in a jar each time you overcome or reach a goal. Spend it on something which delights you and will be a continuing reminder of your progress.

12. Be aware of situations that depress you or that cause you to feel lonely, bored, frustrated, or discouraged. These emotional states can trigger the desire to masturbate as a way of escape. Plan in advance to counter these low periods through various activities, such as reading a book, visiting a friend, doing something athletic, etc.

13. Beware of pride and self-pity - attitudes of the heart. Pride says "I deserve something" and leads you down the path of lust and acting out. Self-pity says "I shouldn't have to go through this." Alan Medinger says this about pride:

Pride exalts the self. Pride tells me I deserve good things. Pride tells me I have earned good things. Pride tells me that I am the real judge of what is good for me. And sexual pleasure is a good thing. "I deserve some sexual pleasure. With what I have been doing recently, I have earned it. Really, I am the one who should determine whether or not I should have this good thing." These rationalizations may be what can cause temptation to come on so strongly after we have experienced a significant success, (<http://www.ldolphin.org/grateful.html>)

Self-pity is the other side of pride. Self-pity tells me what a poor thing I am. Self-pity tells me that I haven't received a fair shake in life. Self-pity tells me that I deserve some comfort.

"I deserve the right to comfort myself considering what I have to put up with in life. I shouldn't have to deal with sexual struggles along with everything else that's laid on me. God, it just wouldn't be fair to deny me this little bit of pleasure." This type of thinking may be what causes us to especially want to retreat into lust when we are angry or have experienced rejection.

So - give some serious thought about how YOU can overcome masturbation. What do YOU do when the temptations occur? And I'll leave you with two thoughts about temptation.

1. Temptations are NOT from God.

James 1:13-15 - Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

2. God CAN rescue you from temptation

2 Peter 2:9 -... the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation... 1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.