

MASTURBATION: RIGHT OR WRONG?

I've been collecting the information for this page over the past 5 years. I've drawn from a combination of sources, including the Bible, my experience as a former sex addict and correspondence with thousands of people involved in various stages of sex addiction. I honestly have not found one long term benefit of masturbation, yet plenty of reasons to refrain from it.

Regardless of whether you are a Christian or not, I encourage you to thoughtfully consider the below points about masturbation and how it affects us.

For those people taking our Freedom from Masturbation study, the below points should help bolster your desire and commitment to seek freedom from the habit.

Non-spiritual points about masturbation:

Masturbation is addictive! I encourage anyone who doubts masturbation is addictive to see how many weeks or months they can go without masturbating.

As with drug addiction, masturbation requires an increasing amount of stimulus to achieve the same level of pleasure. This often leads people into searching for more and more sources of things to lust after to feed their craving for masturbation (ex. porn). Left unchecked, this progression can result in debt, sexual crimes, perversions and other harmful effects.

Masturbation conditions our bodies to respond to self-stimulation, which is self-centered. This damages our ability to relate to another person sexually. Sex is a relational experience, where we give attention to another person's needs at least as much as to our own. If we've been serving our own desires habitually, we may find it difficult to give our partner the attention he or she deserves.

Masturbation conditions our bodies to respond to fantasy more than reality: Sexual arousal causes powerful hormones to be released that cause emotional bonding between the person and the stimuli. The hormones reinforce the thought patterns and memory associated with the stimuli. The result is that we become sexually oriented toward whatever we've been looking at/experiencing when we've been masturbating.

For example, a married man who has been masturbating to pictures of blond women may find it hard to get excited about his brunette wife. This could ultimately lead him to seek a sexual experience mirroring his fantasies outside his marriage.

The truth is that reality and fantasy rarely match up. For example, porn usually features people with perfect bodies who tirelessly pursue sexual adventure. Real people don't typically function like that, and often the acts depicted in porn aren't as enjoyable as they may look. People who continue to load their minds with these fantasies will inevitably start to believe they are true.

For example, a man who has been masturbating to pictures of sadomasochism may start to believe that women enjoy being beaten up during sex. When his wife refuses to help him act out his sado-fantasy, he could become belligerent. He may even try to force her to do it anyway, believing the lie that once she experiences it she will like it.

Masturbation causes sexual imbalance: Masturbation stirs up our sexual emotions and trains our bodies to seek a sexual release more frequently than normal. Sex is an important part of many people's lives; however, common sense tells us that there should be a balance between sex and the other activities in our lives. Masturbation disrupts that balance by training our bodies to expect gratification more frequently than normal. The reality is that most of us don't have time and/or opportunity to be having sex 3 or 4 times a day. The imbalance between reality and fantasy can likely drive an addict further into a masturbation habit.

The imbalance caused by masturbation addiction will affect other areas of our lives by diverting energy, time and resources into sexual fantasy. For example, here's a typical scenario we read about often in email: A man stays up late each night to surf for porn to masturbate to. His job performance suffers because he can't stay awake, his family life sours because he's grouchy, his wife is alienated from him by his lack of affection and interest in her, and his debt increases because of the credit card charges from the porn sites he's visiting to feed his habit.

The people most likely to suffer from the imbalance are people who don't have a regular provision for sexual intimacy (ex. teens, singles, divorcées, and widowers). Ironically, these are the same people that may be strongly tempted to indulge in porn and masturbation. If they wet their appetite by

indulging, chances are that they could easily get hooked in the addictive cycle that the imbalance creates.

Spiritual points about masturbation:

Masturbation causes you to be “mastered” by sin: The Bible says that there are only two things that we can be a slave to: sin or righteousness. There are no other masters. Paul wrote, “Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?” (Romans 6:16 NKJV).

Which master does masturbation bring us under?

In almost every case, it is used to complement lust and the Bible identifies lust as sin in several places. For example, Jesus said in Matthew 5: 28, “But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” When you consider that masturbation usually includes thinking about what it would be like to have sex with someone (i.e. lusting) while simulating the physical feeling, its easy to see that it brings us under the master of sin.

God does not want people to be mastered by sin.

For example, he told Cain, “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it” (Genesis 4:7 NKJV). Cain let sin rule him by murdering his brother Abel. His life was drastically affected. He lost his job, his peace, his home, and his blessing and spent the rest of his days as a “restless wanderer” (Genesis 4:12). Likewise, we have the same opportunity to choose our master. If we choose sin as our master, our life will bear the fruit that sin brings - i.e. destruction, sorrow, dissatisfaction, death, etc.. If we choose righteousness as our master, we will reap life!

Paul wrote:

20When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 6:20-23 NIV

Masturbation uses your body as an instrument for sin: Your body is to be presented and used as an instrument for righteousness (not sin). Paul wrote, “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:12-13 NKJV).

God can best use us when we keep our “vessels” (body, soul & spirit) free of sin. Paul wrote: “In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:20-22 NIV).

Our responsibility is to cleanse ourselves from sinful motives and purposes. Masturbation is the exact opposite of fleeing evil desires because it involves setting our minds on the evil desires and simulating the sexual act with our bodies. In so doing, we are hindering the usefulness of our vessels for God.

Masturbation defiles God’s temple and grieves the Holy Spirit: As believers in Jesus Christ, we are one with God’s Spirit, who lives in our bodies. Our bodies are literally temples of God since the Holy Spirit lives in us. Sexual sin is uniquely harmful in that it damages this special union we have with God. Paul alluded to this by writing that sexual sin is sinning against our own bodies (1 Corinthians 6:18). He even compared it to trying to unite Jesus with a prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:15-16). Since masturbation is a form of sexual sin (via lust and sexual idolatry), it will likewise damage our relationship with God and defile his temple (our bodies).

God’s command to the Christian is to “honor God with your body,” (1 Corinthians 6:20 NIV) which is a form of spiritual worship that we do physically. Romans 12:1-2 NIV states, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. 2Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his

good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Masturbation reinforces “carnal mindedness”: Paul wrote, “Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want” (Galatians 5:16-17 NIV). Masturbation sets our minds on gratifying our sinful desires and in so doing we become “carnally minded.” Carnal mindedness destroys our life and peace and keeps us from pleasing God. Paul wrote, “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:5-8 NKJV).

Masturbation brings you into deception and corruption: Masturbation opens the door to the deceiving influences of lust. Paul wrote about this deceit in Ephesians 4:22-24 NKJV: “put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

Continuing to embrace lust through masturbation will therefore hinder any progress we want to make in becoming the “new man” God created us to be. Our repeated practice of lust through masturbation will also bring about a “hardening” of our spiritual heart toward God (Hebrews 3:13). This could ultimately cause us to turn away from God completely.

Concluding Comments

Overall, masturbation can rob you of many of the blessings God has planned for your life. If you are a Christian, you have an obligation, not to live focused on fulfilling your fleshly lusts, but rather, to live focused on fulfilling the desires of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:12-13). Masturbation poses the threat of lifelong bondage and a handicapped spiritual walk. Jesus was resurrected so that you also could live in a new life, free from the slavery of sin.

Roots of Masturbation

Previous page: Masturbation: Right or Wrong?

Note: As you go through this page, feel free to print it, write on it and use it as a study guide.

Masturbation is usually an outer manifestation of an inner problem. We can use an agricultural analogy to illustrate. Consider the masturbation habit as

a weed and its underlying causes as the weed's roots. Weeds tend to have robust roots. If you want to remove the weed, you must remove the root as well, or the weed will grow back. Likewise, if we want to permanently stop the masturbation habit, we'll need to find and remove its roots.

Step 1: Ask God to help you answer the question, "Why am I masturbating?" A simple prayer for this could be:

"Heavenly Father, I invite you to help me discover the reasons for why I have been masturbating. Please reveal the truth to me through the Holy Spirit as I am able to deal with it. In the name of Jesus Christ, I command any voice that is not of God to be silent now. I speak the peace of Christ to my mind, spirit and body. Thank you, Father, In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

Following this prayer, it would be helpful to spend time listening for the Holy Spirit, writing down any thoughts that come up, and thanking God for whatever he reveals.

Some common reasons for masturbation we've seen include:

- Medicate pain of rejection, abuse, poor self-esteem, etc.
- Medicate frustration or stress
- Love of pleasure
- Self-pity
- Independence / self-sufficiency
- Complement a porn habit
- "Safe" sex / trying to maintain physical virginity
- "Healthy release" of sexual tension
- Impatience: Unwilling to wait on God for sexual provision

My former masturbation habit was based on many of the above reasons, and it's quite possible that it's a combination of reasons for you as well.

Reasons for my habit: _____
(list as appropriate for you)

Step 2: Identify the associated roots
Once we know the surface reasons for our habit, we can then seek to uncover the root causes of those reasons. Again, we should invite God to guide us in

discovering the roots.

A sample prayer for this could be:

“Lord, please help me understand the root causes behind the reasons for my habit. Please help me to see the truth. Thank you, Father! Amen.”

Roots usually begin with an experience that disrupts our healthy physical, emotional or spiritual development. If we respond to that experience in unhealthy (i.e. sinful) ways, it will cause the root to grow. There are so many possible scenarios of how these roots can get started, that it's impossible to cover them all here.

By sharing some of the roots we've seen, we hope to help you uncover the roots under your habit.

Generally, the roots involve sin that we committed or that someone committed against us. Here are some examples of roots linked to masturbation:

☐ Trauma /violence/abuse/molestation

☐ Rejection (ex. unloved by parents, being made fun of by peers, abuse, getting dumped by girlfriend or boyfriend, etc.

)

☐ Generational influences

☐ Unforgiveness (including bitterness, resentment, grudges, etc.)

☐ Occult activity

☐ Sexual sin

☐ Pride (“I can do it myself,” or “I don't need anyone,” or “I don't need God,” etc...)

☐ Lust / sexual idolatry

☐ Soul ties

☐ Homosexual activity and other perversions (bestiality, group sex, fetishes, etc.)

Take some time to think through your life starting from as far back as you can remember and look for indications of starting points for roots such as those listed above. Let God's Spirit lead you as you do this. I've listed some typical life periods below where roots are often started. Be sure to write down any roots that the Lord shows you as you do this.

Early childhood (0-3): _____

Pre-school (3-6): _____

Grade School (7-12): _____

Teens (13-19): _____

Career/College/Marriage/etc. (20-40): _____

Other: _____

Here is an example of how these roots can get started and grow in our lives:

A father continually berates his 7 yr old son for his poor aptitude for sports. The father is unable to see any value in his son's love for music, art and drama. Those activities "are for sissies," according to the father. The son is emotionally wounded by his father's rejection and this becomes the starting point of a "root of rejection."

The father continues to express his disapproval with his son's preferences. The boy begins to believe that he can do no right in his father's eyes and that he'll never amount to anything. As the boy grows into adolescence, he responds to the pain of rejection by being reclusive and rebellious. When a

friend introduces him to pornography and masturbation, the boy discovers a pleasure he never knew before. The intimate images of porn offer him the acceptance and love he's always longed for. It doesn't matter to him that the porn is based on fantasy - he'll take any love and acceptance he can get. Finding solace in masturbation, he soon finds himself addicted to it.

Step 3: Remove the roots

The importance of removing the roots cannot be underestimated. Not only do root fragments grow new weeds, but they also release "spiritual poison" that damages us. Moses mentioned this fact in Deuteronomy 29:18 NIV:

"Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison."

In the Israelites' case, idolatry was the root that produced the poison of spiritual confusion. Masturbation's roots produce poisons such as sexually-charged memories, selfishness, lust, perversion, numbed conscience and damaged relational skills. The longer we allow the root to remain in us, the deeper the damage that we'll have to recover from.

Since there are so many possible roots, we will give you some general suggestions to help you discover your roots. From there you will have to seek God's guidance on the specifics for your situation.

It is possible that you may encounter resistance as you go into the areas of the roots. The resistance may indicate the presence of evil spirits/demons associated with the root. Manifestations of this resistance can widely vary. Some examples could include: hot flashes, difficulty speaking, difficulty breathing, uncontrollable thoughts, uncontrollable bodily movement, rage, physical pain and the mind "blinking out."

We share this not to cause fear, but simply to prepare you in advance for what you may experience. If the devil has you in bondage, he will be reluctant to let you go. No matter what happens, know that the Lord Jesus is with you and lives in you and is greater than any power of the devil. If any such manifestations occur, you can take authority over them in the name of Jesus Christ and command them to stop. An example statement you can make is, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command the evil spirit causing this

manifestation to stop. I am saved by the blood of Jesus and I have authority over you. Release me right now.” At that point you should be able to proceed. If not, you may want to obtain help from a trusted group of believers who will help you pray and work through the root area. It may be that you will need “deliverance ministry” to completely deal with that area.

We encourage you to be patient as you go through the different areas of your roots. This can often take time to deal with. Don't allow the devil to convince you to give up. Keep at it persistently as the Lord directs you. Don't settle for the lie “I'll never be free.”

A. Start with Prayer: Prayer plugs us into God's power supply. He has the power to work the impossible. Jesus said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26 NIV). As you pray, believe in your heart that God's power is going to make the difference. Believe that he is hearing your prayer and will respond. Your faith completes the “circuit” of God's power in your life.

Sample Prayer: “Father God, I thank you for loving me and dying for me. Thank you for being with me right now. Please help me remove the roots of my addiction completely. Please guide me and protect me from the evil one. I believe in the freedom that is mine through Jesus Christ. Please help me in any unbelief I may have. Thank you, Father.”

B. Confession, Repentance and Release: In this step we take responsibility for our sin involved with the masturbation and its roots. We repent from the sin by turning away from it and no longer embracing it. Finally, we must release any unhealthy attitudes we have clung to.

□ **Confess and repent from the sin involved with your masturbation habit:** These typically are lust, sexual idolatry, love of pleasure, and pride in self-provision. Example prayer: “Heavenly Father, I confess that I have idolized sex in my mind and dwelled on lustful thoughts. I confess that I have imagined myself committing sexual sin while masturbating. I confess that I have turned to my own provision for sex and have not waited for your best for my sexuality. I repent from all of these activities and renounce my tolerance of these sins in my life. Thank you for forgiving me through the blood of Jesus! I receive that forgiveness in Jesus' name, Amen.”

□ Confess and repent from the sin you committed in each root area: Taking the roots you wrote down in the above section, now confess the specific sins involved that you committed. If you are not sure about the sins involved, ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify the sins involved. Here are some examples of the possible sins involved with certain roots:

Root Examples of possible sins involved

Trauma fear, rage, violent behavior, unforgiveness

Rejection unforgiveness, rebellion, perversion

Occult activity pride, lust for power, trying to control others (witchcraft)

Sexual sin lust, sexual idolatry, love of pleasure, pride

Soul ties Cherishing sin memories

Homosexuality Rebellion, unforgiveness, lust, hatred of man/woman

Example prayer for confession and repentance:

“Heavenly Father, I confess that I have sinned in the following ways: _____

_____.

Please forgive me for these sins. I turn from them now and shut the door on them. I seal the door with the blood of Jesus Christ. I renounce my activities associated with these sins. I recommit myself to you, Lord, body, soul and spirit.”

□ Release anything we are holding on to related to the former roots that are a stumbling block for sin. Examples include unforgiveness, cherished sin memories, anger, hatred, malice and the desire for revenge. These attitudes will continue to poison our mind and emotions until we release them to God.

Unforgiveness and cherished sin memories are common with sex addicts. To release unforgiveness, we must forgive the people involved (with Jesus' help). For the cherished sin memories, we must surrender the memories to God and restrain our thoughts from fantasizing over the memories.

Example prayer of release: "Father, I release these sinful attitudes and/or cherished memories to you right now.

Specifically, I release _____ (list your specific items). Please take them from me and cleanse me with the blood of Jesus from any residue or poison they have left in me. I forgive the people who have done evil to me: _____ (list them).

Please fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit now and replace any former areas of sinful attitudes with love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, self-control, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness. Thank you, Father."

C. Pray for healing: This final activity is where we invite God to complete the emotional, physical and spiritual healing in us that our confession and repentance has cleared the way for. 1 John 1:9 NKJV says, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Also, James 5:15 NIV says, "And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven."

God will purify us, heal us, raise us up and forgive us when we've confessed our sin and prayed in faith for healing of our addiction. Praying for healing is not rocket science. Remember that it is the Lord who will do the healing and all you need to do is to ask and believe that he will do so. You don't have to pray an elaborate prayer to receive results. You simply need to be sincere and prepared to back up your healing by obedience in the respective area.

Some activities that will help you get into the right mindset for praying for healing include:

□ Spend time in praise and worship prior to praying

□ Review and recite scriptures on healing during your prayer times and throughout the day to boost your faith level

□ Allow God time to respond during your prayer, i.e. don't talk the whole time! Prayer is a conversation with God, so take time to listen and reflect on God's word.

□ Allow plenty of time for your prayer, so that you are not rushed

□ Pray intermittently in tongues as the Lord leads you

□ Remember to thank the Lord for the healing he has and will do in you

□ More on prayer: Prayer Basics

Here are some example prayer excerpts addressing typical root issues:

□ Removal of any remaining roots: "Lord, I pray that you will complete the root removal process that I have started. If there is any that I have missed, please reveal it to me and help me remove it. "

□ Revelation of any unconfessed sin associated with your former addiction: "Lord, please shine the light of your truth in me, especially in any dark areas of sin that I have not confessed. Please help me recognize my sin for what it is."

□ Restoration of healthy sexual desire and function: "Lord, please heal my sexuality and redirect my sex drive to normal function as you originally designed it." And, if married: "Please restore a healthy, loving sexual desire in me for my spouse and in my spouse for me."

□ Cleansing/healing of memories of sexual sin or abuse: "Lord, please wash my mind and conscience with the blood of Jesus. Please cleanse my mind from the dead works of sin that I have done."

□ Breaking of soul ties developed through sex sin, pornography or abuse: "Lord, please cut any unhealthy soul ties that I have developed with pornography, fetishes, sex partners, family members and anyone else. I apply the blood of Jesus to each unhealthy soul tie I have developed. By faith I declare those soul ties broken in Jesus' name. Father, please restore

me to wholeness - body, soul and spirit. Please restore those persons I have been tied to as well. “

□ Destruction of the altar of sexual idolatry in our mind: “Lord please help me destroy the altar of sexual idolatry in my mind. I renounce the use of my thoughts for worshipping and lusting about sex. I have the mind of Christ and I take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

□ Deliverance from any evil spirits that continue to oppress you: “Lord Jesus, please free me from any remaining evil spirits that continue to torment me. Please reveal any remaining footholds that they may have in me, so that I may repent.” (see deliverance study for more help) We encourage you to pray for healing in those and any other areas the Lord reveals to you.

It may also help to have some trusted friends in the Lord pray with you in faith for healing. Some roots take more prayer sessions than others to heal from, so be patient and persistent. For example, I periodically pray for continued healing and cleansing of my memories of sexual sin even many years after being porn-free. It can take time to restore the mind to health and wash away the evil things we’ve allowed in to it.

Masturbation Recovery

Previous page: [Masturbation Roots](#)

After removing the roots and praying for healing, now we must take actions to “secure the beachhead” of freedom that we have established. We must take steps to fortify our faith and break the old trigger patterns.

Fortify your faith

We can count on the devil testing us to see if we are in fact free. He typically uses a two-prong attack: he starts with lies to cause doubt and then follows with temptations.

If we believe the enemy’s lies, our critical piece of spiritual armor, the shield of faith, is weakened. Paul wrote that we can use the shield of faith to “extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one” (Ephesians 6:16 NIV). If our faith is weakened by doubt, then the flaming arrows will get through and we’ll be likely to fall to temptations.

To neutralize an attack on our faith, we must recall the truth that destroys the lies. This is why it is crucial that we get into the Bible at least once a day (typically in a “quiet time”) and start familiarizing ourselves with the

truth that sets us free (John 8:31-32). If you don't know the truth, you'll be susceptible to the enemy's distortion of it.

To maximize our battle readiness, we can memorize key scriptures. Such effort will pay off in the long run. I've discovered first hand that scripture memory increases my effectiveness on the spiritual battlefield.

During my daily quiet time, I simply write out the verses that are meaningful to me on 3 x 5 note cards and review them periodically until I have them memorized. When the enemy hits me with lies trying to weaken my faith, I can respond by reciting the memory verses that apply. Jesus demonstrated this defense strategy when he faced Satan in the wilderness temptations (Luke 4). To every temptation Jesus responded by quoting the applicable scriptures that diffused the lies.

Here are some common lies the devil uses against recovering sex addicts and sample scriptures that refute them:

- "You haven't changed...you're not really free...it's just a matter of time before you fall" (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 1:12-13)
- "God doesn't care about you and he won't provide for your sexual needs and desires" (1 Peter 2:24; Matthew 6:33)
- "It's impossible to live without masturbating" (Galatians 2:20; Matthew 4:4)
- "The Holy Spirit is not really living in you and he won't help you" (Romans 8:11,13)
- "God won't provide a way out of temptation for you" (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Other lies

The second part of the enemy's attack is temptation. If we have believed the lies in the first part of the attack, we'll be more likely to bite on the temptations in the second part. However, if we have stood firm in our faith, it should be much easier to take "counter-temptation" actions. The word gives us the frame work for these actions, which include:

- Flee the temptation (2 Timothy 2:22; Genesis 39:6-13)
- Look for the way out of the temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Pray for help (Matthew 26:41; Hebrews 2:18)
- Take control of your eyes (turn eyes away, shut off temptation source, etc.) (Isaiah 33:15)
- Arrest sinful thoughts, cast down sinful imaginations/speculations, and

redirect your mind heavenward (2 Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:1-2)

☐ Use your body as instrument of righteousness and not for sin (Romans 6: 11-14)

It will take practice to master these counter-temptation actions, but as you do them, you will find it easier to resist.

Identify and break trigger patterns

Sex addicts often have particular triggers and/or rituals that cause them to “act out” (i.e. masturbate). These will obviously vary from person to person, and usually they will relate in some way to the roots of your former addiction which we examined on the previous page of this study. For example, some of typical triggers for masturbation can be:

- ☐ Stress/Fear/Rejection/Loneliness
- ☐ Taking long showers
- ☐ Watching late night TV with sexual themes
- ☐ People-watching
- ☐ Surfing the internet when alone
- ☐ Thumbing through magazines with sexual themes
- ☐ Looking at porn (obviously)
- ☐ Sensual contact with girlfriend/boyfriend
- ☐ Fetishes
- ☐ Dwelling on sexual memories

Take a moment to ask God to reveal to you what your particular triggers have been for masturbation and write down what he reveals to you:

When we respond to a trigger and move toward acting out, we'll find it's easy to go back down the old familiar road of temptation and follow through with masturbation. What we need to do is determine a Godly plan of action on how we will now respond to a trigger when we encounter it. For example, here are some possible actions to take regarding the above triggers:

☐ Stress/Fear/Rejection/Loneliness: Run to Jesus through prayer on the spot instead of running to masturbation to medicate yourself; remind yourself of key verses that address the trigger (ex. fear (Romans 8:15; 1 Peter 5:7); loneliness (John 14:18; Matthew 28:20); Rejection (Romans 8:

15-16); Stress (1 Peter 5:7))

- Taking long showers: Take “navy showers,” i.e. get the scrubbing done and get out; if you have to, make the water mix colder than normal; play a praise and worship CD in the background to get your thoughts focused heavenward

- Watching late night TV with sexual themes: Set an early time you will turn the TV off by each night and stick to it. Use the time you would have spent watching TV to do something meaningful (spend time with family, pray, worship, read the Bible, etc.).

- People-watching: Take control of your eyes and force them to stop looking at the people you know are causing you to lust. For example, if teenage blondes cause you to lust, then choose to look the other way when you notice one coming your way. Don't let your gaze dwell on the temptation! (see control eyes for more)

- Surfing the internet when alone: Don't get on the computer unless someone is there nearby. If you know you'll be home alone, don't even turn the computer on. Plan something to do in place of surfing the net.

- Thumbing through magazines with sexual themes: Avoid the magazine stand or wherever you are looking at the magazines. If the magazines are not your own, consider asking the owner for help in restricting your exposure to them. For example, if your roommate's porn collection is causing you to fall, you could ask him/her to lock it up or password protect it.

- Looking at porn: Stopping your porn viewing is an obvious move, but it is seldom easy. Do whatever drastic measures you can to stop the input of porn images. This will always help you stop masturbating.

- Sensual contact with girlfriend/boyfriend: Ask your friend to help you by joining you in committing your relationship and activities to God. Agree in prayer together to not cross the boundaries that will cause sexual arousal. (ex. long kissing, sleeping together, heavy petting, mutual masturbation, etc.) Taking such action will force you to prove that your love for God is more important than sexual gratification and affection.

□ **Fetishes:** Confess your idolatry and pray that God will cut you free from the unhealthy attachment you have to the fetishes. Also, ask the Lord to break any demonic power involved with the fetish and the hold it may have on you. Force your mind and eyes off any fetish-related thing that causes you to fantasize.

□ **Dwelling on sexual memories:** Whenever you catch yourself reminiscing about your sexual memories, start pleading the “blood of Jesus” over the memory. Follow this by forcing your thoughts onto a wholesome topic (see thoughts).

Now, for your particular triggers from the previous section, brainstorm on actions you can take to break the pattern for each one and write them down below:

Take a moment to declare to yourself and the Lord in faith that you have the power to choose differently and break the patterns that have plagued you in the past. You can pray:

“Heavenly Father, I am a new creation in Christ and the life that I live now I live by faith in God, who loved me and gave himself up for me. The Holy Spirit lives in me and is strengthening me now to live as the truly changed person that I am in Christ. I have the power through Christ who strengthens me to break my old trigger patterns of masturbation.

I commit myself to breaking the trigger patterns. Father, please strengthen my conviction to arrest any trigger that I may encounter. Please sharpen my conscience and my passion for purity. Thank you, Father! In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

Finally, back up the commitment you just made by sharing it with a trusted friend, accountability partner or pastor who will agree with you in prayer and encourage you in keeping your commitment over the coming months.