

THE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY SERIES

WHAT IS GOD'S HEART ON
**SEXUAL
ADDICTION?**

Excerpt from

KEYS FOR LIVING LIBRARY



SEXUAL ADDICTION

The Way Out of the Web

What Is God's Heart on Sexual Addiction?

"I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:4).

Grace—let's begin there. There's grace for you. You're not alone. Help is available.

The apostle Paul wrote those words to a church that had many issues, some of which were sexual sin. As he began his letter, he did not start it with a note of guilt, shame, disappointment, or disgust. He began with gratitude and God's grace.

That's where God begins with you—with grace. The Bible says *"he gives grace generously"* (James 4:6 NLT).

Maybe you've tried to stop but you can't. Perhaps you had some short-term success, but it happened again. You feel caught in a cycle of guilt and shame and repeating behaviors you don't want to do. You might feel like the apostle Paul, who said, *"I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway"* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

If that's you, there's grace for you. Friend, *change is possible*. But the answer is not found in trying harder, beating yourself up, or hiding it and promising to change. It's found in Jesus Christ.

"Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?

Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord."

(ROMANS 7:24–25 NLT)

God loves you and has a heart of grace and compassion for you.

"The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made" (PSALM 145:8–9).

God wants you to regularly remind yourself of who He is.

"O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help" (PSALM 86:5 NLT).

God wants you to see yourself through His eyes.

"You are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you" (ISAIAH 43:4 ESV).

God wants you to stay away from all sexual sin.

"God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor" (1 THESSALONIANS 4:3–4 NLT).

God wants you to run and flee from sexual sin.

"Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body" (1 CORINTHIANS 6:18 NLT).

God placed our sin and guilt on Christ so we could be forgiven.

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (ISAIAH 53:5–6).

God extends complete and total forgiveness to you.

“Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, ‘I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.’ And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone” (PSALM 32:5 NLT).

God wants you in His presence—to cleanse you of the guilt and shame you feel.

“Let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water” (HEBREWS 10:22 NLT).

*“There’s grace
for you.
It’s found in
Jesus Christ.”*

God wants you to replace the lies you’ve been led to believe with His truth.

“Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (PSALM 25:5)

God wants you to find your identity in Him—as His beloved child.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 JOHN 3:1)

God wants you to fight sin—avoiding and getting rid of things that tempt you.

“So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away . . . And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away” (MATTHEW 5:29–30 NLT).

God wants you to seek accountability.

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (PROVERBS 27:17).

God can use counselors to help you find victory over sexual addiction.

“For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory” (PROVERBS 24:6 ESV).

God wants you to help others who struggle with sexual addiction.

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (GALATIANS 6:1–2).

Key Verse to Memorize

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
(ROMANS 8:1)

Key Passage to Read

*“God’s will is for you to be holy,
so stay away from all sexual sin.
Then each of you will control his own body
and live in holiness and honor—
not in lustful passion like the pagans
who do not know God and his ways.”*
(1 THESSALONIANS 4:3–5 NLT)

How to Replace Lies with Truth

Underneath much of our sin and struggles are lies we believe about ourselves, about our situation, and about God. The Bible says that we *“suppress the truth”* and that we have *“exchanged the truth of God for a lie”* (Romans 1:18, 25 NASB). These lies are often connected with a sense of guilt and shame. These feelings and the lies we believe can impact our behavior and keep the cycle of addiction going. Therefore, it is important to identify the lies you’ve been led to believe and replace them with God’s truth.

*“Teach me your way, O LORD,
that I may walk in your truth.”*
(PSALM 86:11)

Lie: “I am dirty. God is disgusted with me.”

Truth: God loves you. He washes you clean and makes you new by His Spirit.

“Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. ... But—When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit” (TITUS 3:3–5 NLT).

Lie: “God will never accept me.”

Truth: The Lord chose you, accepts you, and will never reject you. He promises to help you.

“I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (ISAIAH 41:9–10).

Lie: “God won’t forgive me again.”

Truth: God’s grace is greater than our sin. He forgives all our sin.

“O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help” (PSALM 86:5 NLT).

Lie: “I am worthless.”

Truth: You matter to God. You have God-given worth because God created you, and that worth can never be taken from you. You are precious in His sight.

“You are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you” (ISAIAH 43:4 NLT).

Lie: “I am unlovable.”

Truth: God loves you, and nothing can separate you from His love.

“Nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (ROMANS 8:38–39 NLT).

Lie: “The temptation is too strong.”

Truth: With God’s help, you can overcome temptation. God is faithful to show you a way out.

“The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure” (1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 NLT).

Lie: “I can’t control it.”

Truth: God has given you free will. You do have control over the choices you make, the actions you take, and your responses to people and circumstances.

“For we are each responsible for our own conduct” (GALATIANS 6:5 NLT).

Lie: “I can’t change. There is no hope for me.”

Truth: You can change. No matter how many times you’ve fallen or how deeply ensnared you feel—with God, there is always hope.

“There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off” (PROVERBS 23:18).

You may have been led to believe other lies about yourself, your situation, or about God. As an exercise, write them down and then look in God’s Word to discover a passage or a truth that can speak directly to that lie. God wants you to *“take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”* (2 Corinthians 10:5). Over time, as you replace the lies with God’s truth, you will be transformed by His Word.

*“Do not conform 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.”
(ROMANS 12:2)*

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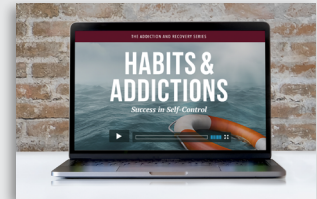
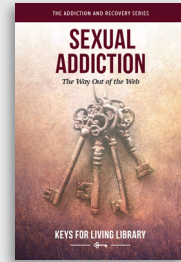
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4 POINTS OF GOD'S PLAN

Whether you're trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you've done or what's been done to you, *there is hope*. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will accept His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*

(JEREMIAH 29:11)

God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (John 3:16–17).

What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).

The Problem: *Sin*

What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, *“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). Scripture also says, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Bible says, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”* (Acts 16:31).

Your Part: *Surrender*

Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (Matthew 16:24–26).

Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

*“God, I want a real relationship with you.
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of your way.
Please forgive me for my sins.
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins.
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.
Change me from the inside out and make me
the person you created me to be.
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

What Can You Now Expect?

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me
has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*
(JOHN 5:24)

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

God gives us His Word not just for information but for transformation. The Lord wants you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). This isn’t something you do alone, but something God does in you by His Spirit.

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on the biblical truths in this resource. Take a moment to pray and ask God to settle your mind and quiet your spirit as you reflect on His truth.

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”
(2 TIMOTHY 2:7)

What are two key truths, Bible verses, or “takeaways” from this resource that you found helpful—or that you simply needed to be reminded of?

In relation to this topic, what behavior(s) do you need to *begin, change, or stop* in order to help you grow into the person God created you to be?

In relation to this topic, what is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome in order to move forward?

What might your life look like a few years from now if you do *not* make changes regarding this issue? How might your life be different if you *do* make changes?

Is there anyone in your life who needs help with this topic/issue? How can you pray for them, and what is one thing you can do to encourage them?

What can you give thanks to God for today?

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself
and God our Father, who loved us
and by his grace gave us eternal comfort
and a wonderful hope,
comfort you and strengthen you
in every good thing you do and say.”
(2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT)*

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