

# Overcoming Pornography

## Spiritual Strength

Need a strong spiritual commitment to overcome a problem with pornography. Pray regularly. Read scriptures daily. Provide service. Do what you need to do to have the spirit with you.

## Mental and Emotional Strategies

- **Don't obsess about it.** The more you think about it, the harder it may be to resist it. Don't be upset when you have a temptation or craving to look at pornography. The difference between a thought and a fantasy is the duration. A thought lasts 2-5 seconds; after that, it starts to become a fantasy. So when a thought comes into your mind, recognize it, then try to dismiss it. Move on to something else quickly rather than getting caught up in trying to resist and talk yourself out of it. The longer you think about it, the more likely you are to do it.
- **Decrease your emotional reaction to pornography.** Understand your feelings. Know that you'll be tempted and that you can dismiss the thoughts.
- **Change the patterns that lead you into pornography.** Look for the situations and feelings that set you up to look at pornography. Is it when you are alone, bored, angry, hungry, or tired? Recognize the steps that can lead you to pornography. When that cycle begins, recognize the early signals and change the steps so you don't end up looking at pornography. Plan ahead for what you will do and have other activities and interests immediately available. Replace it with something better. Find things that will make you happier and more fulfilled.

## Boundaries and Accountability

- **Support network.** Create a support network. Don't be alone in the struggle. People are more successful with diets when others know about their goals and support them. Likewise, you'll be more successful overcoming pornography when others know what you are trying to do and support you. Don't be ashamed of setting up a support and accountability system. It's a mark of commitment and righteous desires. Even professional airline pilots and rock climbers go through safety checks and have other people double-check them.
- **Accountability.** Be accountable to and talk about it with your bishop and your parents, spouse, or another person of trust.
- **Internet.** Whenever you get on the Internet, have 2 of the following 3 safeguards in place.
  1. Create a list of favorite safe sites and share that list with someone else. Then, only visit those sites.
  2. Have someone else in the room who can see your screen. If that person leaves the room, you must stop using the Internet.
  3. Whenever you get on the Internet, tell a person (by e-mail, text, or verbally) that you're getting on the Internet and which of your favorite sites you intend to visit. When you finish, communicate with them again and confirm that you only visited those sites and that there was no problem with pornography.

Note: if you go to a site that's not on your favorites list, then #2 and #3 have to be in place, although they can be the same person.

- **Boundaries reduce urges.** Boundaries help people feel more in control of their actions. Following them can actually help reduce the frequency and intensity of the urges. Reducing opportunities to view pornography can actually help suppress the creation of the urges in the brain. On the contrary, when you cheat the boundaries, then your urges will increase. If you agree to these boundaries, you must agree to do them 100% of the time and forever. If you don't make the commitment, then they won't work.
- **Television.** Set boundaries similar to the Internet. Only watch TV with someone else, or when you're alone, just watch DVDs that you know are safe.
- **Magazines.** Only read magazines that you know are safe and read them when someone else is in the room.