

So you've dropped your cross again!

Dear Fellowship Member,

You should now have completed the six sessions necessary to facilitate the building of your bespoke sexual addiction recovery plan. You have had the opportunity to engage in over 12 hours of online chat and been provided with 1:1 mentoring and support. So why is it you are still not 'cured' – why are you still seeking relief in pornography and masturbation on a weekly basis? Is it because this system does not work or is there a deeper problem you have not understood?

I hope that your response to me is:

"I'm not cured - but at least I am now able to manage my addictive sexual behaviours to the point that they no longer control me. I can now see a future and a vocation ahead of me that does not involve weekly porn abuse."

BUT, if your actual response is:

"I tried everything you said but I still keep sinning sexually and I don't know what else to do? Your system just doesn't work for me!"

THEN DON'T DESPAIR - REPAIR!

You know that it took me years to finally reach a point where I actually felt in control of my addiction. My road to recovery is not complete and I do still feel strong temptations and I do still sometimes fall – but at least I now know how to get back up and 'build back better'. This course does not make you a Saint but it does put you on the road to becoming one. This is your Way of The Cross...

My path to sanctity is no different from that of any other soul who is battling an unwanted habitual vice. It is painful and very often undeserved and unfair but certainly no more than that which Our Lord willingly took on to save us? In truth, the reason that so many of us fail is that we are unwilling to give up on the earthly pleasures associated with our sin. By accepting or telling ourselves that it is not our fault then we can ease our conscience and feel less responsible when we fall.

THAT IS WRONG AND WILL NEVER LEAD YOU TO RECOVERY.

What I no longer do is 'lose control' and allow myself to spiral back into a cycle of pornographic addiction. So why am I any different to you - how has this course changed me? In essence it taught me self discipline and self management AND through that, I took control and responsibility of my unwanted sexual behaviours. I decided that suffering **a month** of withdrawal was worth it in the long run...

- I accept that I am the only person who is responsible for remaining 'dry'.
- I accept that there is no 'magic wand' that I can wave to cure me.
- I understand that 'like an alcoholic' I must manage my environment.
- I know that without support, faith and honesty – I will eventually fail.
- I have learnt that being lazy leads me to sin.
- I know that I must 'self-manage' daily to avoid those near occasions of sin that lead me to sin.
- I am no different from the alcoholic who must never again 'touch a drop'. One sip and my fall will be hard!

In each unit you have been shown a new aspect of healthy self management. I have called them ‘pillars’ as by their nature they are vital if you are to keep your strategy working. They need refining and honing to suit your particular behaviours – one size does not fit all! Most of all, you need to **practice** and **persevere** with them. All of these tools are readily taught as part of management skills in the employment sector – they are proven to be effective when properly used.

For this approach to work you must also be honest with yourself. You must make the effort to understand and accept any sexual triggers / leaks that lead you to falling. Do not hide from them or deny they really exist. You must not be looking for ways to ‘exploit’ circumstances or to avoid confronting your failures.



Ultimately, you must accept that you are not the only person who is fighting this addiction but you certainly don’t want to be the one who keeps giving up because it is ‘too hard’.

If you have thought hard about what you have to lose and gain then surely that is enough motivation to impose the necessary discipline in your life. God gave you this life out of love. How do you intend to repay that gift of love?

So what is the point of this unit?

I am not expecting anything of you. I want you to look back at what you have already achieved, despite the falls, and be rightfully happy. We all fight daily crosses and each have temptations that others cannot truly comprehend. Our fight though, is against the devil - NOT God. Throughout these units I have continually reminded you never to despair...always to get back up.

You need to recognise that God has given you the honour to carry such a burden. He trusts that you have the strength and desire to do this for Him...for love of Him. He will not mind that you stumble through lack of perseverance or lack of faith. He *will* mind if you deliberately give up on His love and His eternal plan for you. This unit is all about TRUSTING GOD and TRUSTING what He wants of you.

In the future, thank Him when you fall to temptations. Not out of duty; but because He has given you the opportunity to demonstrate, in true humility, how much you love Him through your struggle. He is our Father, and as with all good fathers, He will never turn His back on us – so long as we don’t turn ours on Him.

Despair is the devil’s **only** way of keeping you blind – so don’t let him do it. When you fall, take your Rosary and pray to Our Blessed Mother for strength to banish away such wicked thoughts. Then thank God for the humility to see your weakness and then acknowledge you need help. Make a sincere Act of Contrition and start all over again.

A WORD OF CAUTION:

If you truly find that nothing else works and you keep on sinning then you may need professional help. It is not a defeat if you cannot do this on your own. Many of us have had to suffer serious abuse in our childhood – this support is not designed to overcome that. Only you will know if this is the case – so be honest with yourself.

Finally – if nothing else works then accept that you must have accountability and filtering software AND you must not be the one in charge of administering it. Better to lose an eye than lose your soul...

Men of Hope – Do's:

- Keep to your daily prayer routine and never be afraid to make it longer ☺
- Be detailed and honest in your daily diary entries – this will provide the clues to your recovery.
- Find that Ejaculatory Prayer and Self Talk phrase that best helps you. It must jolt you away from a sinful moment long enough to allow your rational thought to engage the brain!!!
- Review, review and review. You must critically review your diary and your failures and successes to improve your self-management plans. This cannot be missed if things are going wrong.
- Have healthy activities planned that cover a diverse range of interests and circumstances. Try learning a new skill and improve yourself. It is great to feel good about your achievements.
- Every morning look in the mirror and tell yourself that you are worthy of God's love – no matter how you are feeling. Reward yourself when you take positive steps forward.
- Have a contingency plan ready for the days when 'nothing' seems to work – **RUN AWAY FROM SIN.**

Men of Hope – Don'ts:

- Don't hide yourself away 'in shame and disgust' and blame everything else for your fall.
- Don't forget how hard you have struggled and how many times you have avoided sin.
- Don't lose sight of the progress you have made – you *are* changing for the better.
- Don't delay your next Confession as you will definitely fall to further sins.
- Don't avoid contact with your peers and support – they want to help you.
- Don't forget God must really love you to trust you with such a heavy burden.

Please, please treat each fall as a minor victory on your road to sanctity. If you promise to learn from each stumble then the battle will eventually become easier. Unless of course God loves you *so much* that he gives you more? (We must keep smiling in adversity)

We are all sinners and the type of sin is truly irrelevant. So don't think you are worse than another just because society treats sexual addiction with disgust. Society is blind to God – BUT YOU ARE NOT! I would rather battle against sins I can recognise than those I fail to see through ignorance or pride. I count my falls as a means to show myself how many times I have had the courage to get back up again – they are victory points...not defeats! Start wearing them as a badge of honour...

To complete this unit:

1. Be honest about your daily behaviours.
2. Be honest about your falls.
3. Be honest in how you approach accountability and support.
4. Be honest in understanding when you have not really tried.

The next group of units will not be available to you until you have reached a level of control that allows you to demonstrate a prolonged period of abstinence (6 months+) or at least several smaller periods of sustained abstinence (4-5 weeks between falls).

(This unit was inspired during the renewal of my baptismal promise on Holy Saturday – Deo Gratias)