

HOPE RESTORED

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When I was 10 years old, I found my brother's porn magazines. This is where my problems began. My mom would find my brother's magazines and would throw them away but never addressed this issue. They just disappeared, only to be replaced by others. I had good parents, but they were too permissive. I always went to church, but this church didn't teach about salvation. I had friends who would share their porn magazines and movies.

I have struggled with an addiction to masturbation and pornography since puberty. My mind has never been clear. I was consumed with always needing a girlfriend. I hated myself and wanted to die. At one point I was bulimic.

At 22, I married the girl I dated in high school. Our marriage wasn't what it should have been. We had a child and then she cheated on me. This sent me into a spiral of grief and self-pity.

In the early 1990's, I met a nice Christian girl. She was younger than I was and was still a virgin. That was a major attraction for me. She knew I had been exposed to porn, but I convinced her that I didn't have a problem with it. Before we got married she asked me if I was saved. I told her I was, but I wasn't.

Over all, our marriage hasn't been bad. Four years ago, I finally put to rest the assurance of my salvation. My addiction was better for a while but soon reared its ugly head again. My wife went away for the weekend to help with a church function. While she was gone one of the "friends" who had been so bad for me showed up and needed help moving. That night I helped him move. While I was at his house, he put a porn flick in the DVD player and offered me alcohol. When my wife came home, I was different. I was angrier and moodier than ever. Oil and water never mix. I was saved now and I was miserable.

The next two years of my life were horrible. I made it horrible for my family. They took the brunt of my anger. My wife was ready to kick me out. I started going to different churches because I thought everyone in my church was a loser. I would tell myself over and over again that I was a loser. I finally quit going to church. My wife and I were fighting constantly. I was masturbating many times a day and I wasn't interested in making love to my wife. I was having sex with myself, so I didn't need her. I have struggled with depression since I was a child, but now it was worse than ever. While my wife and children went to church in the evenings, I would sit at home with a loaded gun practicing suicide. I was masturbating, I didn't have porn in the house at this time, I didn't need it because it was in my mind. I didn't want to leave my family, but I felt there was no way out. I had completely lost hope.

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Years ago, we were invited to attend the Greater Hope Banquet. I was very interested in going because of my problems, however; I didn't tell my wife why I wanted to go. The spring of 2013, I called *Greater Hope*. They were in the middle of a Living Waters class and I couldn't join at that time. So I struggled until December 2013. I cried out to God that December to please help me, and if not, just to take me home. The next day Kathy Kipps called and told me that a new group would be meeting in January. God had given me my answer.

I started Living Waters in January of 2014. In February and on my birthday, I attended the Living Waters Retreat. I took communion and was finally able to make a recommitment to God. The following Monday, I came clean with my wife. We cried a lot. I have had one relapse, but only a temporary one that lasted a few days. I still struggle with depression, but with God's help, I can make it through that issue also. Last summer, I took The Game Plan class and have benefited greatly from it.

I have come to realize that I was medicating myself with masturbation. It caused a chemical reaction in my brain. Just like a drug addict, I needed more and more. Eventually, after masturbating, I would shiver because I was so cold. I believe that demon spirits followed me home after I helped my "friend" move. I would have terrible nightmares.

I don't know where I would be today (quite possibly dead), if there wasn't an organization called "*Greater Hope*." I am so thankful for Ron and Kathy Kipps. God has used them in powerful ways to help me and my family. Thank you so much.