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## I Was Powerless Against Porn!

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*Hello friends, my name is Chris McKenna. I'm a dad, educator, and technology advocate. I'm honored to share with all of you about some of the steps God has led me to take. My hope is that my story connects with your story in some way.*

*Currently, I'm the Educational Resource Manager for [Covenant Eyes](#). I have a BA in Accountancy and Spanish from Western Michigan University, which led me to a 12-year career in business advising with Ernst & Young. In the fall of 2009, God abruptly called me into full-time student ministry role at*

*Cornerstone Church. In 2015, I started*

*[protectyouneyes.com](#) as a ministry to equip and educate parents and teens on the latest gadgets, apps, and how to use the Internet well. My mission is to give **busy** parents and **hyper-connected** kids the information and tools they need to use technology awesomely.*



**PROTECT  
YOUNG EYES**  
defending kids from online danger

*But, this was never my plan. At this point in my professional career, I was supposed to be a partner at a global public accounting firm making a ton of money! Thank goodness God's view is wider and longer-term than my own.*

***Psalm 147:5, "Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure."***

*It's been a wild ride, and I expect that there's still more to come. But, there's something that simmered in the background during much of this. I have a very personal motivation for speaking up about using technology well.*

*Phillip Yancey said, "Many Christians have one issue that haunts them and never goes silent." I heard someone else say, "What you fight, fights you." Both are proving exceedingly true in my life.*

*I was exposed to pornography around age eight with a stack of magazines. My 8-year old brain didn't understand everything I saw, but I knew a couple of things: (1) it was "naughty" and (2) I was drawn to it. I feel like this gave birth to chemical connections that I just wasn't ready for. I had a few other elementary school exposures that helped solidify those connections through other books.*

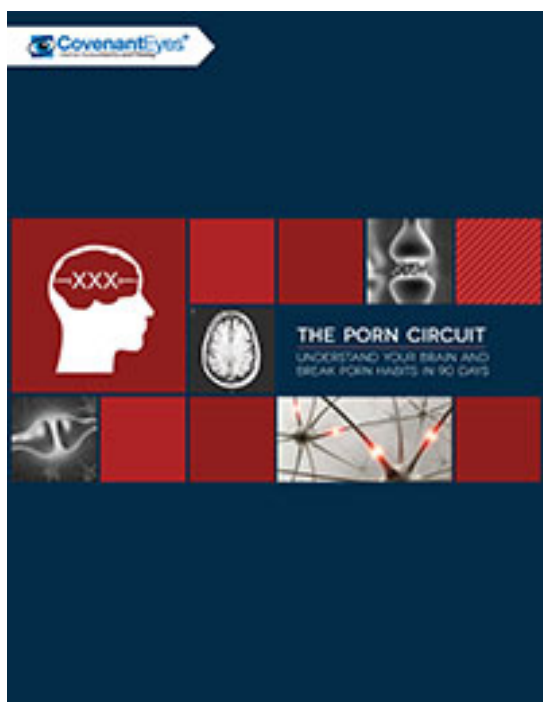
*Everything was fairly quiet just due to a lack of opportunity to find inappropriate things until the internet came about in the mid 90's while I was in college. As soon as the Internet was "turned on," pornographic content came right along with it. It was accessible, affordable (free) and anonymous – no one would ever know (at least that's the lie I believed).*

*I pride myself on having a strong work ethic and for being a self-starter. I've always enjoyed accomplishing a list of to-do's – even adding things that I've already accomplished to a list just so I can cross them off. I recently re-took Tom Rath's Strengths Finder survey, which had "achiever" at the top of my strengths list. Valedictorian of my high school class. Varsity athlete. Suma Cum Laude and Presidential Scholar in college. Learned a foreign language. Accomplished CPA and business advisor for Fortune 500 companies. Loving husband. Father of four amazing children.*

*But, I was powerless against porn. For over a decade, it ruled me. I tried to stop so many times. And, although I experienced temporary victories, it always came back and WHAM! Like a blood-thirsty lion, the urge to click through endless online images and videos devoured my will and I was powerless. It controlled me. Trust me, I desperately wanted to stop, but I couldn't. Unlike just about everything else I had set out to do in life, I discovered that my strength was just not enough to overcome porn.*

*I wonder if any of you reading this can relate to what I'm saying. The statistics related to men in full-time ministry who struggle with porn tell me that many of you know exactly what I'm talking about.*

*For decades, opponents of pornography fell into one of two categories – religious conservatives or feminists. Now, with over 24 years of internet usage behind us, many doctors, psychologists and scientists are starting to consider the real possibility of a correlation between prolonged pornography use and adverse brain development, fractured relationships, and overall poor mental health.*



*In the early days of my recovery, I came across the e-book, [The Porn Circuit from Covenant Eyes](#), and for the first time, I started to understand that my issue was more between my ears than below the waist. It explained in very simple terms how my pornography addiction was releasing a potent chemical cocktail, which was hijacking my brain's rewards center, and actually solidifying neuro pathways to crave pixels instead of a person.*

*In ancient history, "all roads lead to Rome," but in the neuroscience community, according to Dr. Donald Hilton "all roads lead to the rewards center". The rewards center is the collection of brain structures that recognize certain stimuli as positive and "reward" the brain with a shot of dopamine in certain "good" situations. At the same time, because the brain is "plastic" or "malleable," repeated exposure to certain stimuli, like porn, hyper-stimulate the brain with an overdose of dopamine (and other chemicals), telling the brain to solidify connections between certain neurons. In other words, neurons that fire together start to wire together.*

*This discovery was terrifying to me. I started to understand the very real scientific possibility that I could teach my brain to crave porn more than my wife. In fact, a porn addiction might even hijack my brain to begin seeing my wife as "competition" with the computer or device that so easily gave me the chemical rush my brain longed for.*

*Back in 2012, at TedxGlasgow, Gary Wilson gave a presentation titled, "The Great Porn Experiment." He provided information in response to a growing demand for scientific evidence explaining why heavy internet pornography consumers were experiencing sexual performance issues, changes in sexual tastes, an escalation towards extreme material, an inability to stop, irritability, and anxiety. In 2013, the Cambridge University neuropsychologist Dr. Valerie Voon performed MRI studies on the brains of men who described themselves as porn addicts, noting changes in their brain matter, specifically the rewards center that mirrored those of a drug addict. In April 2016, Time wrote "Porn and the Threat to Virility," an*

article exploring the stories of young men experiencing erectile dysfunction with real women, but have no trouble being aroused by hardcore pornography.

Of course, some in the scientific community are still skeptical. It's impossible to isolate all variables that may have contributed to the behaviors of a porn addict. I get that. But, many smart people are starting to point towards a real correlation. Those same skeptics probably support the theory of evolution. Wouldn't Darwinian thinking at least point to the possibility that my brain would be drawn towards an easy sexual rush? Wouldn't that be the easiest way to ensure survival of the species?

I also wonder if any of the skeptics were ever addicts themselves. I may not understand all of the neuroscience, but I was **different** while addicted to porn. I had disdain towards my wife. I was short and impatient with my children. I became deceptive and sneaky. I felt drawn towards clicking on things that were slightly more graphic and distorted than last month's flavor. I had no trouble staying up until 4am while dopamine cloaked my exhaustion. There was this intangible relational distance that existed between me and those I loved the most. I was a worse human being.

I don't know exactly what my brain was doing, and I can't prove porn was the reason for these changes, but the correlation between watching porn and the diminishing quality of my life felt very real to me.

Conversely, my life without porn is good. I think more clearly. I live more freely. I have a oneness with my wife that was absent during my addiction. I can stand in front of my sons and daughter with integrity and nothing to hide. I can be an advocate for decency, real love, and freedom. I can remove any possibility from my conscience that my clicks are contributing to the slavery, exploitation or rape of a child. It feels good.

Life is **better** without porn. But, staying clean is hard work.

Currently, I don't have any access to make changes to my iPhone. Everything is controlled by my accountability partner, who owns the 4-digit restrictions passcode to my iPhone. Every website I visit on my phone is reported to my accountability partner using Covenant Eyes' software. Is this an inconvenience? Absolutely. Is it worth it? You bet.

It's my own personal version of "plucking my eye out" (i.e., getting serious about temptation) that I think Jesus refers to Mark 9:47.

**But God doesn't waste our hurts, and he has turned my greatest misery into His ministry.**

This is why I started Protect Young Eyes, after hundreds of hours of research, with tons of free tools for parents. I now lead a team of five individuals that speaks regularly around the country. During calendar 2017, we completed 225 presentations, speaking to over 17,600 kids and 5,600 adults. We help kids honor God with their clicks and we give parents the tools they need to form their kids in the digital age. We do this because we want to prevent as many kids from struggling as adults in the way that I did.

The list of internet dangers is long, but our blog explores some of the more significant risks for kids today, including YouTube, Tricky People (the new stranger danger), Snapchat, Screen Time, and Instagram — and you can hot link to each using the links below:

YouTube: <https://protectyouneyes.com/youtube-restricted-mode-parental-controls/>

Tricky People: <https://protectyouneyes.com/tricky-people-stranger-danger-in-the-digital-age/>

Screen Time: <https://protectyouneyes.com/screen-time-kids-parental-control-5-recommendations/>

Snapchat: <https://protectyouneyes.com/snapchat-discover-parents-beware-shocking/>

Instagram: <https://protectyouneyes.com/instagram-porn-problem-instaporn-kid-safe/>

Frederick Douglass said, "It is easier to build strong children than to fix broken men."

But, I'm afraid that our churches and pews are full of broken men.

In April 2016, The Barn Group issued *The Porn Phenomenon* study, which does a brilliant job of presenting page after page of survey data showing us that our hypersexualized culture has infiltrated the pews and our pulpits. Consider a few findings:

- 1 in 5 youth pastors and 1 in 7 senior pastors admit to using porn at times. That's more than 50,000 U.S. church leaders.
- 41% of male, practicing Christians age 13-24 say they use porn regularly.
- 62% of teens and young adults report receiving a nude image from someone via text, email, social media or app.

Porn does not discriminate. Being a Jesus-lover inoculates some, but on any given Sunday, chances are there's a porn addict in your church who is desperate for help—and sometimes he's doing the preaching. And yet, only 7% of pastors report their church has a ministry program for those struggling with porn.

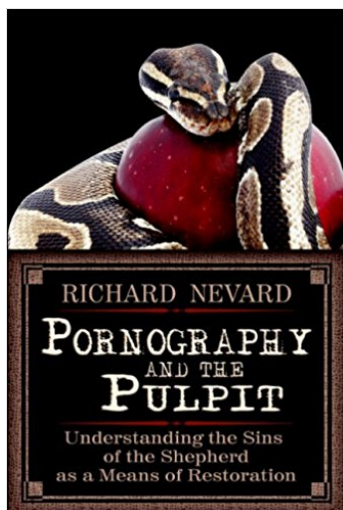
It's time to get fired up and boldly state that pornography is a direct affront to the Gospel of Jesus Christ! It trades real freedom for bondage and real relationships for isolation and loneliness. It's a counterfeit representation of the oneness we were meant to experience "in Christ alone."

Ron DeHaas, co-founder and president of *Covenant Eyes* said, "I believe the Church is the solution. The Church must take the lead." In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said to Peter, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." There isn't another plan for the Gospel! Each of you is part of the plan! The Church will carry the day.

So, what is the solution? I have some ideas, but there's not enough space to share them in this Newsletter. For that, you'll have to wait for the next one! Until then, if you are in a ministry that includes families, please bless them with my website, *Protect Young Eyes* ([www.protectyoungeyes.com](http://www.protectyoungeyes.com)) where they will find enlightenment, equipment, and encouragement in the battle to teach their kids how to use technology responsibly.



Your brother in Christ,  
Chris McKenna



More than 50% of Christian clergy in America are reportedly addicted to pornography. The Church is stalemated on how to deal with this moral collapse. Because of this, churches are under the leadership of spiritually fragmented men and women. The life and work of the church is grievously suffering for it. This epidemic threatens the family and the Church, causing untold numbers of spiritual casualties.

Pornography addiction is a spiritual sickness, infecting the nature of human sexuality and forever altering the human psyche. Remarkably, the same personality traits that compel an individual toward pastoral ministry are found in persons most inclined toward sexual addiction.

After thirty years of sexual addiction, Richard Nevard shares his personal struggles and extensive research, offering clear insight into this malady. Nevard suggests a practical plan for healing and restoration. This book is essential for every pastor, denominational leader, Christian counselor and seminary professor.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU



**Mark R. Laaser, M.Div., Ph.D. is the President and Founder of Faithful & True** and the host of The Men of Valor Program, Faithful & True's online radio show. Dr. Laaser is nationally recognized as the leading authority in the field of sexual addiction and healthy sexuality with over 29 years of recovery experience. Mark has written fifteen books on the subject of sexual addiction, including his groundbreaking book, *Healing The Wounds of Sexual Addiction*, *Becoming a Man of Valor*, *Taking Every Thought Captive*, *7 Principles of Highly Accountable Men* and the recently-released, *The Fight of Your Life*, with Dr. Tim Clinton. Dr. Laaser lectures around the world and teaches at colleges, universities, religious organizations and treatment centers. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa and a divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary.  
**[www.faithfulandtrue.com](http://www.faithfulandtrue.com)**

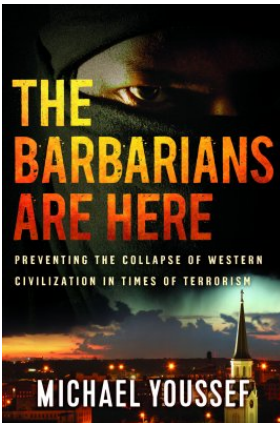
Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker with Mike Yorkey have written two very helpful books:

- ***Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time***
- ***Preparing Your Son for Every Man's Battle: Honest Conversations About Sexual Integrity***



**Dr. Schaumburg is the founder of Stone Gate Resources**, a counseling ministry offering brief intensive counseling. The ministry specializes in the treatment of adultery, pornography and all forms of sexual sin through Biblical Intensive Counseling. It is this pioneering program that has drawn over 3000 laity and clergy from the U.S. and twenty foreign countries. Many who come for counseling are married couples struggling with difficult marriages that include sexual dissatisfaction, lack of intimacy, and unfaithfulness. He has two excellent books available: *False Intimacy: Understanding The Struggle of Sexual Addiction*, and *Undefined: Redemption from Sexual Sin, Restoration for Broken Relationships*. **[www.stonegateresources.org](http://www.stonegateresources.org)**

**If you are struggling with pornography, please don't remain in silence and isolation.** That is a deadly combination. I will be glad to listen to your story and help connect you with compassionate, confidential, and competent people who can help you. My contact information is listed below.



My dear friend Tom Brady, sent me this book for Christmas. I read the entire book in two days. It was riveting, engaging, challenging, and encouraging. You may want to take a look at it yourself. In the Author's Preface, Pastor Michael Youssef writes:

*Though I am an American and a Christian, I was born in the Middle East and I grew up in a Muslim-dominated culture. I have a deep love and respect for people of the Middle East, whether Christian, Jewish, or Muslim. Please understand that the word barbarians in the title of this book refers to Islamist extremists and terrorists, not to Muslim people in general. This term has a specific meaning, which I discuss in greater detail in chapter 1. I use this term not as an insult or to hurt anyone's feelings, but because it is the most accurate term to describe a specific group of people who are not members of our Western civilization and who are actively trying to destroy our civilization from without and within.*



Between Christmas and New Year's I watched several YouTube videos with Jonathan Cahn. The message he gave in response to President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is worth watching. I realize Christians have divided viewpoints on this issue. Regardless of what your position is or how you reached your decision, I believe it could be wise to listen to what Jonathan Cahn has to say about this matter from Scripture.

The Prophetic Event - Trump's Jerusalem Declaration: Jonathan Cahn (Part 1 of 11 Parts) Jonathan Cahn - Hope of the World.  
**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVyyE9n2pZM>**

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

*Every year I collect my thoughts with pen and my pad.  
I recall the past months, the good and the bad.  
I view my reflection, the one of my heart,  
To see all my failures and plan where to start.  
To fix all life's blunders and begin fresh anew,  
I draw up my plans of what I should do.  
Each year I am humbled as the thought comes to mind,  
The changes I long for are all the same kind!  
Last year I desired some changes to make.  
I tried and I tried, yet each one did I break!  
Oh, is there no hope for completing this task?  
Am I merely going through motions that add to my mask?  
I present to the world the person I long to be.  
But the person inside knows the truth they can't see.  
I'm fragile, so fragile, imperfect in all.  
I make many mistakes and continue to fall.  
So many people depending on me,  
but I don't have the answer for each and every plea.  
As I resolve yet again for this brand new year's start,  
I will view the reflection, the one of my heart.  
Oh joy, my soul sings, what there do I see?  
The reflection of Christ, who is living in me.  
He'll cover my failures and work on my flaws,  
He'll convict all my sin and root out the cause.  
My dear resolution this year truly is:  
To dwell in the thought that I am completely HIS.  
Thank you blessed Father for this year's new day.  
Help me to reflect you in what I do and say.  
~~~Laura DeWeerd*



**Pastor Perpetua Bayege Simon is the first woman pastor ordained in the country of Tanzania.** She was ordained by Bishop John Williams, President of Central Bible Ministries International. It was a huge celebration and several government officials attended. Perpetua is Senior Pastor of Dominion Life Ministries, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania-East Africa.

Sue and I have enjoyed the privilege of spending time with Perpetua. We fell in love with her! She has a delightful sweet spirit and she loves Jesus with her whole being. God has filled her with a passion for reaching the lost with the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



**Thank you for helping us to be a blessing to pastors and their families through your prayer support and generous financial contributions to our ministry.**

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