



Renewing the Mind

Volume 1, Week 4, Lesson 4

Synthetic Attraction: Some years ago, male and female Gypsy Moths were brought into the United States with the intent of developing an amazing silk industry. However, instead of mating and creating a silk industry, they busied themselves by eating all the trees, which was disastrous. The scientists worked very hard to get rid of the Gypsy Moths. They developed various pesticides, but nothing worked. Then one scientist suggested creating a synthetic, but intense, form the female scent. The male Gypsy Moth would then seek after the smell of the female Gypsy Moth. During the mating season, with plenty of females to choose from, the male searched for his perfect female, but could never find her. Eventually, they couldn't mate and all the Gypsy Moths died. The male Gypsy Moth was looking for the synthetic smell – not the real smell of the one right in front of him. In essence, this is exactly what has happened with pornography.

The way God designed you is: whatever you're beholding at the point of sexual release, you literally glue to, attach to, hunger for, and will crave again. – Dr. Doug Weiss

Oxytocin and Vasopressin are “bonding” hormones that promote monogamy in sexual relationships. Women mainly produce oxytocin, while men produce vasopressin with small amounts of oxytocin. Oxytocin teaches us to forget, by separating the pain from the pleasure. Outside of God’s will, these hormones will impair our judgment. In a marriage relationship, these hormones bond you to your partner during sexual release. These same chemicals are released while watching porn or during fantasy and bond you with the images. These images become your sexual triggers.

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Pornography damages the brain: Brain scans reveal clear similarities between a cocaine addict’s brain and a porn addict’s brain. Repeated viewing of pornography damages the pleasure centers, sears the conscience, and makes a person attracted to what is synthetic rather than what is real. It physically alters the structure of the brain. The only way to reverse the damage is by going through the process of renewing the mind.

A brain problem: When we examine the science behind sexual bondage, it is evident that we are dealing mainly with a brain issue, not a moral issue. Sexual bondage starts out as a moral problem (the baited hook analogy) and ends up becoming a brain problem. However, this doesn’t take responsibility away from the sex addict. He is still responsible and held accountable for his decisions and actions.

That’s the power of sexual bondage: it promises you everything, but gives you absolutely nothing. – Dr. Ted Roberts

Hope for healing: In Romans 12:2, the Apostle Paul wrote, “...be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Science is now confirming what the Bible already recorded over 2000 years ago. Now that we have discovered neuroplasticity, the brain’s ability to change throughout life, we know that is possible to physically restructure our brain by renewing it spiritually through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and by taking conscious steps to change our thinking. When our minds are renewed, our actions will naturally be consistent with our thought life.

Tools to Conquer: Group Confidentiality.

There are two options in this battle: we can either restrain or retrain. Now, restrain is the old approach – try harder! Restraining won’t work. The only answer that works is that you have to retrain your brain – try smarter! And you can’t do that alone. You’re going to need a trainer; someone to help you.

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The importance of a mentor: It’s important to grasp that we cannot win this battle alone. We need our brothers-in-arms to keep us accountable and to strengthen us on our journey, but we also need godly mentors who will disciple us. It’s important to find a mentor who understands the process of overcoming sexual bondage.

Evaluate yourself: Make sure that you have taken the SAST, online (ConquerSeries.com/sast). Note the four indicators of sexual Bondage:

- 1. Are you involved in binge-purge cycle?

- 2. Have you tried to stop but cannot?

- 3. Do you lie to cover up your behavior?

- 4. Do you have a sense of guilt about your behavior or are you living in contradiction to what you believe?

Tools to Conquer: Group Confidentiality.

Some of you may be saying right now, “I’m not going to share all my deepest, darkest secrets to my small group.” In your group, you will make a commitment to confidentiality and a commitment to not share anything outside of the group that was shared inside the group. Once you take the step of opening-up, you’ll discover you’re not the only one struggling. Through growth and confidentiality, you’ll learn to trust the guys in your group.

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Handling disclosure: Do not disclose your problem to your wife until after you’ve had a least six months of sobriety, or you will risk re-traumatizing her. Based on the experience of group leaders and members who have successfully gone through the Conquer Series, we recommend that you go through the Series once more after you have completed the entire course. This Series is packed with so much information that is usually takes a second round to digest it. Once you “graduate” from the Conquer Series, remain in an accountability group such as a Pure Desire Seven Pillars of Freedom group. The men in your group will be able to help you when the time comes for disclosure. But at some point, no matter the cost, your wife needs to know everything. This is integral to your healing and freedom.

Note: *For those of you who have already disclosed your behaviors to your wife, we recommend that you continue to be open and honest with her. From our experience, many wives become frustrated when their husbands stop sharing once they enter a Conquer Group. Although you want to avoid any form of staggered disclosure – retraumatizing her with sporadic new information – continue to share what you are learning about your behavior to reinforce and build trust in the marriage.*

Discussion

Watch DVD 4 of the Conquer Series before answering the following questions:

1. When we say that sexual bondage is mainly a brain problem, does it mean that a man in sexual bondage shouldn't be held responsible for his actions? Why or why not?

2. Romans 12:2 says: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Knowing now that your brain is pliable until death (neuroplasticity), name some spiritual and practical things you can do to renew your mind and begin creating new neural pathways.

3. What is the benefit and wisdom of waiting at least six months before fully disclosing your addiction to your wife? What is involved in properly disclosing your addiction to your wife, or your significant other if you are not married, but in a serious relationship?

Accountability

Note: *If there are any new members in the group, have them read and sign the Memo of Understanding and Covenant to Contend before proceeding with this part.*

Last Week's 7 Day Mission

1. Last week we took an in-depth look at the FASTER Scale; identifying the various levels and behaviors that move us from Restoration toward relapse. In light of this new information, were you better equipped to recognize your behaviors?

2. What was the lowest level you reached on the FASTER Scale last week? Did you call someone in your Conquer Group When you observed yourself sliding toward relapse? Share your experience with the group.

3. How did you do in journaling your battles during the week?

4. Were you able to call each member of your Conquer Group this past week?

5. How did you do preparing for battle each night? Did you face any specific challenges? Share your experience with the group.

7 – Day Mission Checklist – Week 4

Note: *The 7-Day Mission provides a concise weekly battle plan built on the key concepts in the DVD Lesson for you to work Out in your Conquer Series Study Guide and Journal. Additional exercises mentioned in the Conquer Series are suggestions For you to add on your own.*

- ☐ Filled out the Disclosure Table below throughout the week; I am prepared to share my answers with my Group next week.
- ☐ Called each member in my Conquer Group
- ☐ Journalled my battles daily
- ☐ Prepared for battle each night
- ☐ Used the FASTER Scale daily in my Conquer Series Journal

Disclosure Table Example

BEHAVIORS	THE FACTS	FREQUENCY / COST
Fantasy, Flirting, or Plans to Act Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexually objectifying women at work and school Fantasies of sexual encounters I would like to have, or from my past Flirting with co-workers Fantasies at night before going to sleep 	Daily 3 -5 times a week Daily Almost Daily
Pornography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heterosexual intercourse and oral sex Group sex: intercourse and oral sex Lesbian 	Once a week Once a month Occasionally
Physically Acting Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three affairs: intercourse, oral sex, kissing Masturbation 	Over a 10 year period 4 – 5 times a week
Other Addictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol, smoking, food 	Most of my life
Financial Costs Of My Addictive Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affairs (meals, presents, weekend away) Alcohol and smoking Porn (magazines, DVDs, clubs, gas) Trip to Mexico with mistress 	\$55,0000 \$7,000 \$2,500 \$3,500

During your group time, write down as many of the behaviors as you can and share with the group what you have identified. These boundaries will help you in this process:

- 1. Use correct anatomical terminology when describing sexual behaviors
- 2. Avoid slang terms to describe sexual acts – refrain from using euphemisms.
- 3. Do not go into details about specific acts; simply describe the behaviors. If you are concerned that something you are going to share could be triggering for other men in the group, talk about this with your group leader before the group meets.

My Disclosure Table

BEHAVIORS	THE FACTS	FREQUENCY / COST
Fantasy, Flirting, or Plans to Act Out		
Pornography		
Physically Acting Out		
Other Addictions		
Financial Costs Of My Addictive Lifestyle		