



12-WEEK WORKBOOK STUDY TO A PROVEN PATH TO SEXUAL INTEGRITY; HELP WITH PORN, LUST, MASTURBATION OR SEX ADDICTION FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

A study providing straightforward help with issues of lust, pornography, masturbation or other forms of sexual addiction from a Biblical perspective

The battle for sexual integrity is fierce. You must be constantly on guard.

This study provides you with the tools necessary to be victorious.

The name for Proven Men Ministries, Ltd. was derived from our acronym PROVEN MEN™ and stands for men who are stamped “proven” by the Lord because they are striving to be:

Passionate for God,
Repentant in spirit,
Open and honest,
Victorious in living,
Eternal in perspective, and
Networking with other ***PROVEN Men.***

Those who have used this study and experienced lasting victory over addiction to pornography or related sexual issues have two things in common: They have developed the attitude that:

- (1) pornography—or other sexual sin—is no longer an option, and
- (2) they are willing to do whatever it takes—God’s way this time.

You’re invited to become connected with us and join our team. Plan to use this twelve-week study to gain the necessary tools to stand firm yourself, while at the same time encouraging and being encouraged by other PROVEN MEN.

Copyright © 2016 by Joel Hesch

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or electronic or mechanical means without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review. Contact information: info@ProvenMen.org.

Published and printed in the U.S.A. by Proven Men Ministries, Ltd., Lynchburg, Virginia.

Second Edition

ISBN: 978-1-940011-12-7

Proven Men, Proven Man, Proven Path, Proven Life, and the *PROVEN* term and acronym are protected trademarks and service marks of Joel Hesch.

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. NIV.

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Details in stories or anecdotes have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved.

Interior Design: 1106 Design

Cover Design: Prototype

Hesch, Joel

12-Week Workbook Study to a Proven Path to Sexual Integrity; Help with porn, lust, masturbation or sex addiction from a Biblical perspective / Joel Hesch.

1. Sex—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Temptation. 3. Christian men—Religious life. 4. Sexual Health Recovery.



**12-WEEK WORKBOOK STUDY TO A PROVEN PATH TO
SEXUAL INTEGRITY; HELP WITH PORN, LUST, MASTURBATION
OR SEX ADDICTION FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE**

A study providing straightforward help with issues of lust, pornography,
masturbation or other forms of sexual addiction from a Biblical perspective.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	5	Appendix E: Why Jesus?.....	372
Orientation.....	9	Appendix F: How Do I Feel?.....	375
Week One Study.....	11	Appendix G: Developing a Heart of Worship.....	376
Week Two Study	33	Appendix H: How to Write a Psalm	380
Week Three Study	65	Appendix I: The Nature of Sexual Immorality	382
Week Four Study	93	Appendix J: Freedom from Sexual Bondage.....	385
Week Five Study.....	123	Appendix K: The Armor of God (Ephesians 6:11–19)	393
Week Six Study	151	Appendix L: My Purpose in Life.....	394
Week Seven Study.....	187	Appendix M: Your Next Bible Studies.....	397
Week Eight Study	219	Appendix N: Falling in Love with God by Following His Ways	400
Week Nine Study.....	249	Appendix O: The Purpose, Practice, and Power of Prayer of Proven Men.....	402
Week Ten Study.....	279	Appendix P: Network Partnerships, A Key to Breaking Free from the Grip of Pornography.....	404
Week Eleven Study.....	309	Appendix Q: Joel and Tim’s Stories.....	408
Week Twelve Study	333	Appendix R: 12 Memory Verses	418
Endnotes	359		
Appendix A: Relational Exercises	362		
Appendix B: Sample Life Goals.....	367		
Appendix C: Names of God.....	369		
Appendix D: Attributes of God	371		

TESTIMONY

“The 12-week study is intensive. So I thank God who has helped me stay faithful to this phenomenal, anointed study. The study led me to making a goal of reading the Bible and praying with the attitude of getting to ‘know’ God. This has been an essential part of my sobriety. I was ashamed, at first, to think that I didn’t know God, or that I even had to pray for God to give me a desire to be pure and holy in His presence. But God helped me to be humble, and humility allows me to see that God’s purpose is for men to be close to Christ, and to meet personally with the Lord through the Bible and prayer.”

Passionately for God,
Repentant in spirit,
Open and honest,
Victorious in living,
Eternal in perspective, and
Networking with other ***PROVEN Men.***



INTRODUCTION: DAILY HEARTWORK

Most men struggle with sexual impurity—pornography, masturbation, lust, or fantasy—and many are trapped in bondage to it. Breaking free requires more than self-will. You need God’s strength. Fortunately, He provides a path to lasting freedom. These materials not only teach you how to be on guard, but to trust in and rely upon God’s power to live out sexual integrity. You’ll learn how to embrace and apply the following six essential components of a **PROVEN** life:

Passionate for God. By taking the focus off yourself (including your rights and circumstances) and putting it onto the Lord, you’ll discover the perfection and goodness of God, who deserves to be praised. Your newfound passion for the Lord replaces the lust for selfish desires and practices. During times of intimate worship, you’ll experience God’s very nature and receive His healing in all areas of your life.

Repentant in Spirit. Until seeing your conduct as wrong because it separates you from closeness to God, you won’t truly want to change. Repentance is not self-manufactured, and it means more than merely having feelings of guilt or shame. Rather, it’s a gift from God, granted to those who humbly seek Him with all of their hearts. True repentance includes both confessing sins and submitting to God, which leads to a changed life.

Open and Honest in communication with God and others. One inward reason people turn to false forms of intimacy (i.e., pornography, masturbation, or fantasy) is that it seems safer or easier than the work required in real, *open and honest* relationships. But your heart and soul inwardly long for true intimacy. Fortunately, God will enable you to fully trust. He will also teach you how to be open and to permit feelings to surface so you can engage in fulfilling and real relationships, instead of escaping into the false forms of intimacy that have ensnared you.

Victorious living in God’s strength. You cannot overcome temptation or defeat lust in your own strength. Yet, by daily guarding your heart and turning to Christ, you’ll lead a victorious life. Each moment you yield

to the Lord and rely upon His power, your actions become pure and holy as He is pure and holy. He won't lead you into, but through temptation while in charge of your life!

Eternal in your perspective. Dwelling on the temporary (your present circumstances) leads to acting according to immediate thoughts and desires. Taking on an eternal perspective, however, brings hope and perseverance during temptations and trials. By looking to God's promises and allowing Him to be your guide, you'll live out integrity in all circumstances. You'll no longer be worn out from chasing temporary pleasures or defeated from the constant battle of trying to control life.

Networking with other PROVEN MEN. Christ always sent His disciples out two-by-two. Victory over an addictive behavior is not won alone. Other **PROVEN MEN** become great sources of encouragement and act as iron sharpening iron (Proverbs 27:17). Become part of the team.

Each of these six "letters" is vital for breaking and remaining free. This study helps you put them into place. If undertaken with humility and purposefulness, it will position you to have the Lord renew your mind, transform your heart, spark your soul, and change your desires. The work is challenging. It requires commitment, perseverance, and a willingness to do "whatever it takes" to meet with the Lord and receive His healing. Therefore, make a permanent and irrevocable decision to seek the Lord with all of your heart, mind, and body.

In the past, you have probably tried using your own strength. This is self-reformation, and it doesn't work. Now it's time to turn to and rely upon God. The study is sometimes referred to as "*Heartwork*" because it is designed to position you to meet with the Lord daily and be changed by Him. A person's sinful conduct changes only when his heart toward God changes. You'll be shown how to stop striving in your own power and how to give up control to the Lord. To be set free, you must really want to turn from sin and live out a **PROVEN** life of holiness in dependence upon the Lord. This is the beginning of a fulfilling relationship with the one True God who loves you and the start of lasting freedom from the bondage of sin.

We highly recommend that this study be used by a small support group or two men working through it at the same time. Although each man works independently through the study every day, the two should gather on a weekly basis to share their struggles and victories while discussing what they are learning. *Networking* is a vital component to getting the most out of the study.

You should note that *networking* with other men means more than surface relationships, which is the same style of relating that has led you to false forms of intimacy. That's why you must avoid the temptation to go without true accountability. Otherwise, you'll simply move on to the next book or program and continue relying on your own strength. There is something powerful about regularly confessing sins and sharing your trials that helps free you from guilt, shame, and other traps that keep you from meeting with the Lord and experiencing His healing. In other words, there are two important parts of guarding your heart. The

Introduction

first is turning to the Lord in devotion and dependence, and the second is linking up with other men with whom you are being vulnerable, open, and honest about your feelings, challenges, and direction in life. Also, keep this eternal perspective: Healing is a lifelong process. Undoing years of habits and backward thinking (following the ways of the world instead of the Lord) won't just happen overnight and it shouldn't end in twelve weeks. It takes time and effort to implement into your life the characteristics associated with being stamped Proven. Don't treat the study as a twelve-week program or expect a quick fix. Those who want the easy way out or a list of things to avoid will not persevere or stand up under the trials of life that surely will follow. Instead, consider the study as a blueprint for daily guarding your heart. Before a builder starts construction, he carefully examines the blueprint, and during the building process he keeps referring to the plans. You should return to this study and continue doing other Bible-based studies for the rest of your life.

Won't you join with us by purposing to become God's friend and be transformed by Him each day? Leading a Proven life is all about humbly seeking and relying upon the Lord and developing the spiritual disciplines leading to newness of life. When you strive for sexual integrity, God will give you His power and strength to live out your commitment to purity, love, and devotion.

Make a donation. After you begin this journey and start experiencing breakthroughs and victory, please consider making a tax deductible donation to support our mission of restoring families one man at a time by helping people embrace a proven way of life that produces lasting victory from strongholds of pornography and sexual addiction. It is our vision to reach one million men and families by helping those who want help through our 12-week study combined with accountability. As a non-profit organization, we are relying upon the generous donations from supporters like you. So, if this study is a blessing to you, then become a blessing to others and make a donation through our website: www.ProvenMen.org.

TESTIMONY

“First and foremost, Proven Men has allowed me to witness and embrace that God is 100% consistent in His character 100% of the time. My all consuming, blinding, persistent self-worship and pride inhibit me from recognizing that I am indeed selfish and prideful.

“No matter how much I hope, I cannot change God, justifying my sin. I have never really prayed nor have I ever really been content. God does not merely take away my temptation for above all else He wants me to seek Him in a relationship talking to Him openly not at Him. My cross to bear, among other things I will recognize and pick up later in my relationship with God, is, indeed, to pursue a ‘proven’ life. Not even a hint of sexual impurity is admissible; therefore, every thought must be recognized for what it is, if it is sin, and released to God. This practice overflows from impurity to issues of anger, laziness, greed, discontentment, all of which I realized control me.

“I have gained the desire to be a needy dependent, content servant of God. Though it will be difficult I want to remain in pursuit of open and honest relationships with other proven men as well as my wife.”

Passionately for God,
Repentant in spirit,
Open and honest,
Victorious in living,
Eternal in perspective, and
Networking with other ***PROVEN Men.***



ORIENTATION TO DAILY HEARTWORK STUDY

1. This study is based upon a five-day format with some light weekend work, so begin on a Monday. Schedule a specific time each day to do the study. Most find that the first thing in the morning is best, even though it means getting up early. It sets a good tone for the rest of the day and prepares you to battle temptations. In addition, it can be hard to find blocks of time later in the day. However, if you simply cannot do it in the morning, be diligent in protecting whatever time you set. It may mean that you must cut out television, Internet, or other entertainment or recreation.
2. The study is very intense because it addresses an intense problem. Plan on devoting forty-five minutes each day. The time it takes to cover everything varies greatly from person to person. Even if you spend forty-five minutes a day, you may find that you cannot complete all of the daily items. This is especially true if you are meditating upon verses and searching your heart. If you have time, you can review some of those items on the weekend. If not, that's okay. Don't beat yourself up. First, guilt and shame are already nooses around your neck that make throwing in the towel or escaping into fantasy appealing. Second, meeting with God is what changes you, not finishing all the work in this study. Therefore, guard against merely checking off homework instead of openly meeting with the Lord. The key point to remember is that you should seek quality and quantity of time meeting with the Lord. Again, don't be consumed with whether you finish the material. If you open your heart to meeting with the Lord each day for the time set, even completing one half of the material each day is excellent.
3. It's best to use the study in a small group or with another man. Healing will be thwarted if you use these materials just like reading another book or following the latest self-help program. In fact, one of the roots that keep you in bondage to sexually immoral practices is a lack of real intimacy with the Lord and other men. A Proven life depends upon developing close relationships and putting into practice what you are learning. Don't try to go it alone. It's crucial to seek out an accountability partner before starting the study. You should talk to him once a week, sharing your temptations, failures, and victories. Give him permission to ask you what your mind dwelt upon and how you struggled. Regardless of the level of his compulsion, ask him to do the study with you. He'll be glad he did.

4. Share daily with someone (your wife if you're married, or a male friend if you're single) the exciting things you are learning. Sharing spiritual truths wisely opens your heart to the healing power of God, and it strengthens and encourages others. The Bible says, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16).

5. Seek a broken spirit (soft heart). Feeling guilty is not the same as being repentant (Hebrews 12:16–17; 2 Corinthians 7:10). God only changes a willing heart that seeks after Him. Therefore, purpose to meet with the Lord to get to know Him. Yield your entire life to God, asking Him to conform your will to His. Commit to doing "whatever it takes" to be free from bondage to sin and enter into a new relationship with God. Accept that healing is a lifelong process, but one in which you'll experience victories along the way. Be committed to staying the course even as setbacks occur. Dedicate the next year to seeking the Lord and doing this study and the suggested studies in Appendix M at the end of this study.



TESTIMONY

“Proven Men Ministries has been a blessing to my life. I was born again at an early age and grew up in a Godly, Christian home. I lived for Christ closely until I was around 15 or 16, and then drifted away from God. Over the next 15 years of my life I continued to spiral downward and allow myself to sink deeper and deeper into sin. Over the 35 years of my life I had grown like an onion, yes an onion. I had put on so many different layers and had pretended to be so many different people that I truly did not know who I really was. The Holy Spirit began to wake me up at night bringing different areas of my life that needed correcting to my attention. As you can imagine this was truly a hard place in my life. Then came my hardest one . . . the one that I hid way down deep in my heart . . . the one that was ‘my secret.’ It, of course, was sexual sin. Praise God now for peeling that layer off. It seemed like the website of Proven Men just popped off the page to me. I went to the website and the devil instantly said to my mind, ‘Ahh, this is just another bunch of people that’s going to tell you all you have to do is pray and read and ‘poof’ you will be all better.’ I, however, continued to do more reading, I then obtained the book *Proven Men Study*. The next morning I began to read it. Oh man, guess what, this person was just like me, I was so amazed that there actually was someone out there just like I was. [I then started realizing] really deep down I was a prideful, hateful, angry, full of lust and a greedy person, that I had always hated in other people. Wow, imagine finding out that you was the person that you actually always despised the most, a hypocrite. But 8 weeks ago, after doing the purity study, I learned the most important thing in my life: God does really love me, He really does want me to be different. For all the times I had pushed him away, when I came to Him, He was right there to draw me closer to Him.”

Passionate for God,
Repentant in spirit,
Open and honest,
Victorious in living,
Eternal in perspective, and
Networking with other ***PROVEN Men.***

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 22:36-39: “‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

WEEK DAY 1 (MONDAY)

Begin this morning by memorizing the weekly memory verse. Read through it several times. Over the next twelve weeks you’ll be asked to memorize twelve short passages of Scripture, which are listed in Appendix R. At the end of this Proven Men study, you should be familiar with and even able to recite each one. Here’s a helpful suggestion: Write the verses on 3x5 cards and take them with you wherever you go.



DAILY READING

As you go over the Daily Reading, be sure to mark up your page and jot down notes. You should not just gain knowledge, but engage in a time of reflection and plan out how to incorporate these things into your life.

Right now, read the article, “*Why Jesus?*” attached as Appendix E at the end of this study, then return here.

- Have you asked Jesus into your heart and made Him Lord of your life? These are the first steps in the process of guarding your heart. Record your commitment to Christ here—write down what you feel in your heart right now for the Lord.

- The next step is making a decision to turn over complete control of your life to Jesus. Record your decision below.



HEARTWORK

The *Heartwork* section is a time to engage your heart, not your mind. Begin right now with this simple prayer: “Lord I need you. Soften my heart. Reveal yourself to me.”

As you start this journey of sexual healing, ask yourself, “Am I truly willing to make pursuing God’s healing a priority above all else in my life over the next twelve weeks?” If so, consecrate this time of healing right now. When you make this commitment, you can expect plenty of distractions to arise. Your job might demand more time or energy, or your spouse, family, and friends may need more of your time. You may also find it difficult to get up forty-five minutes earlier each day or otherwise fit this *Heartwork* study into your daily routine. At times you’re going to ask, “Can I really do this? Is there no end to this tunnel?”

You’ve entered into a spiritual battle, a time to turn to, not away from, God. You’ll want and need His power. In the past, you relied on your own strength, and it didn’t work. This time, rely on God. Be patient. No matter how hard it will seem, the Lord won’t abandon you. Stay committed. You have God’s promise to transform you: “The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).



PRAY

Spend five minutes in prayer. Prayer can be simply talking to God. Picture the Lord with you right now (He is with you). Tell Him of your fears and struggles. Ask Him to open your heart to His healing path and to give you His strength and power to wake up early each morning or otherwise set aside time each day to meet with Him and to carry out your commitment to sexual integrity.

If it's hard to pray for five minutes without your mind wandering, don't be discouraged. New relationships take time to form. Stick to it, and keep talking to God with a goal of meeting with Him. Set a timer if you need to, but do spend at least five minutes in prayer.

Here's a helpful suggestion: Write down a short prayer or list prayer items in the space below, such as the name of a person to pray for or a situation or need that is on your heart.



READ THE BIBLE

Always have a Bible handy while doing the daily study. You will be asked to read from it each day because the Bible is the living and active Word of God, capable of penetrating your soul, convicting you of sin, transforming your thoughts, and renewing your heart (Hebrews 4:12). In the pages of Scripture, you will meet with and experience the Lord. Right now, read and meditate on these verses: John 1:12-13; 3:16-21; and 1 John 3:1-3. Then, finish today's study.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 22:36-39: “‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

WEEK DAY 2 (TUESDAY)

Ask God to open your eyes to what He considers impurity and sin and to give you His desire for absolute purity and holiness as you read “*The Nature of Sexual Immorality*” in Appendix I (turn there now). What insights did you discover, and how will they impact your life today? Write your thoughts below.



HEARTWORK

What grabs your attention from this passage of Scripture: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28).



DAY 2

Stimulating your sexual drive by outside sources (i.e., other than unselfish intimacy with your spouse) is improper and fuels a lust that cannot be quenched. Setting expectations of how often you must have some form of sexual release is living for self-gratification, which only sets your heart on a continuous pursuit to satisfy a nature that will always want more. What changes will you make as a result of these truths? Will these changes include considering others more important than yourself? Will they include taking on an eternal perspective? Write out your commitments.

Meditate on each of the following verses and jot down any insights or commitment to turn from evil:

“Let those who love the Lord hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked” (Psalm 97:10).

“To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech” (Proverbs 8:13).

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good” (Romans 12:9).



PRAY

Spend five minutes talking to God right now. Use a watch or set a timer if you need to.

- Ask the Lord to cause you to see and hate the ugliness of pornography, lust, fantasy, and masturbation.
- Tell God how you will turn to and trust in Him.
- Confess your selfishness (wanting to be first), self-sufficiency (wanting to be in control), self-gratification (wanting to be served), greed (wanting more), and pride (wanting it on your terms).
- Ask the Lord to be the master and to make you a willing servant. (Include all of these things in your prayers every day this week.)
- Be sure to pray for other Proven Men that they too will hate sin. Write down their names as you pray. Be specific in your requests to God.



READ THE BIBLE

Read Psalm 119:1–16. Make this the song of your heart!



SPECIAL NOTE:

Occasionally, there will be a “Special Note” at the end of a day. Turn to this as time permits and only after prayer and Bible reading.

*The letter R in PROVEN is for Repentant in Spirit. Do you see lust, fantasy, pornography, and masturbation as 100 percent wrong? If you don’t see them as evil, or if you have not chosen to hate them, then you most likely are only playing a game at trying to stop. Therapy, religion, or even this study won’t make you stop sexual immorality. Change must come from a *desire of the heart followed by reliance upon the Lord*. Impure things such as pornography and fantasy must be viewed as unhealthy and undesirable evils that are no longer welcome in your life. State your desire and determination to hate such sins by writing a short prayer to God expressing your deep Godly sorrow over your impure lust greed, pride, self-sufficiency, and refusal to turn over every area of your life to God.*

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 22:36-39: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

WEEK DAY 3 (WEDNESDAY)



DAILY READING

Ask God to open your heart and reveal truth to you as you read the first two and one half pages of the article “*Freedom from Sexual Bondage*” in Appendix J. (Stop reading after the paragraph, “Make a Commitment Now.”)



HEARTWORK

- What are the twin root issues that keep sexual sins alive?

- List ways in which you have been self-consumed, selfish, or proud.

- How do selfishness and pride hinder your relationship with God, and why is that important to know?



PRAY

Set a timer if you must, but pray for five minutes.

- Pray for the gift of repentance. Keep asking as if your life depends on it.
- Ask God to open your eyes to the sin of separation from Him. Spend time talking to God about the direction of your life and how you are now choosing Him over the world.
- Ask the Lord to strengthen your family and other Proven Men. (List them as you pray.)
- Openly discuss with God anything else He presses upon your heart. Keep talking to, listening for, and sharing with God.



READ THE BIBLE

Read and meditate on Luke 10:1–20. When you are finished reading, ask yourself these questions:

- Why were the men filled with joy when they returned?



DAY 3

- What was Jesus' response?

- Why do you think He responded this way?

- What lesson did Jesus want them to learn about finding lasting joy?

Reminder: On a daily basis, you should be sharing exciting truths you are learning from this study with your wife, if you're married, and with others. This is an important step in the transition from closed relationships to open and real relationships that bring about healing. It also builds trust and draws you closer to others.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 22:36-39: “‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

WEEK DAY 4 (THURSDAY)



DAILY READING

Read the rest of the article “*Freedom from Sexual Bondage*” in Appendix J. Write down any insights you discover.

Describe in your own words the battlefield and the road to victory.



DAY 4

Even though setting boundaries does not stop sensual desires, boundaries are still important. You can't heap burning coals on your lap and not get burned (Proverbs 6:27-28). Write down how you will begin to avoid and remove the coals that have fueled illicit sensual desires.

Record anything else you have learned today and how you will begin living out a Proven life.



HEARTWORK

Have you made a total commitment to live for Christ and yield completely to Him so that He lives and acts through you? (Reread this sentence, meditating on what it means. Make that commitment now.)

It's time to put to death the selfishness and pride that have kept you in bondage. Start living in victory and freedom today through the power of God. It begins with yielding control to the Lord and choosing to follow His ways.



DAY 4



PRAY

Seek a Proven life.

- Ask God to light in you a fire and passion to seek Him with all your heart. Spend several minutes right now talking to God about your desire for purity and a real relationship with Him based upon your gratitude and love for Him.
- Repent of (turn from) the sins you once welcomed in your life.
- Talk openly to the Lord, sharing struggles, fears, hopes, and dreams.
- Ask Jesus Christ to give you His strength to fight temptations and a desire to live a life dependent upon Him so that you will live in victory.
- Ask God to give you an eternal perspective and to renew your mind and change your backward thinking about what really matters in life.
- Confess how you have refused to be vulnerable with other men, and tell God how you will begin networking with others (including men with whom you develop close relationships) allowing them to be a part of your life and of the healing process.
- Ask for God's seal to be stamped on you Proven. Right now, pray for other Proven Men, writing down their names as you pray. (You'll soon realize that five minutes is not enough time for prayer!)



READ THE BIBLE

Read and meditate on Psalm 119:17-48.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 22:36-39: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

WEEK DAY 5 (FRIDAY)



DAILY READING

A little-known book in the Bible, Obadiah, contains an important point and warning: “The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, ‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’ Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,’ declares the Lord” (Obadiah 1:3-4).

Write out answers to these questions: What does pride do? What is the result?

Did you notice that pride leads us into seeing ourselves as being self-sustaining and independent from God? Have you seen yourself this way? It’s time to embrace the truth and surrender to the Lord.

As you contemplate the effects of pride in your life, remember that pride deceives you into selfish thinking (and actions) in the area of sexual impurity, the very matter over which you want victory!



DAY 5

The Bible says in 2 Chronicles 26:16, “But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God...”

We are unfaithful to God and others in many ways, including various ways of withholding, neglecting, or cheating. Jot down a few notes regarding how you have been selfish, proud, or unfaithful toward:

God

Your spouse (or future spouse)

Family members

Friends or others whom the Lord brings to mind

Do you see how selfishness and pride fueled these thoughts and actions? How will you respond? It's not enough to feel guilt or shame. You must want to die to selfishness and humbly turn to the Lord for renewal. Slowly read the following verses, noting how these things sometimes describe your heart and actions.

“In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God” (Psalm 10:4).

“But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger” (Romans 2:8).

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice” (James 3:16).

Can you see how those who engage in sexually immoral practices are guided by this same selfish ambition? What will you do about it? Will you shrink back into fantasy to escape reality, or will you open up your heart and soul to the Lord and allow Him to grant you true repentance that leads to humility? *Your healing depends upon which master you choose to serve: Self or God.*



DAY 5

Be encouraged! Many who were once slaves to sexual sin have been set free by God. Today is the day for you to switch masters and wholeheartedly seek after the Lord, living to obey Him and enjoy His presence. Explain in your own words how the switch is made, and then make an everlasting commitment to being God’s loyal and faithful friend, turning to and trusting in Him.



HEARTWORK

Pride and selfishness blind us to the truth about our relationship with God, which is designed to be one of dependency upon Him. Ask the Lord to show you how pride has blinded you to His truth.

Read through the list of feelings in Appendix F. Write down how you feel now, and how you have felt at various times during the week. (Practice being aware of your feelings.)

What plans do you have for tonight? Friday nights often bring heightened temptations. Plan ahead for engaging in Godly activities. Break the rituals you once followed and replace them with seeking after the Lord. Tonight, read Appendix A and select one or more of the relational exercises. Why not also write a love note to the Lord and spend a night in praise and worship?



PRAY

Be sure to spend at least five minutes in prayer, but don't ask for your own blessings, such as an easier time at work, a raise, or a new car. Instead, remove yourself from the focus of prayer. Pray for others. Ask God to heal someone you know who is sick, to save someone you know who has rejected God, and to have mercy on someone you know who is hurting. It's good to pray for your family as long as your request isn't something intended for your own benefit (e.g., asking God to make your wife a better cook or help your children behave so they are quiet around you). It's also appropriate to confess sin and ask God to work in your life to break your prideful heart. Right now, talk to God. Tell Him your struggles and how you need Him to overcome them for you.



READ THE BIBLE

Read Romans 6:17-23.



SPECIAL NOTE:

Are you beginning to see the big picture now? You were created to love and worship God (Matthew 4:10) and to have a personal relationship with Him (James 2:23; John 1:12; 1 John 3:1). Write down how this helps you see why a self-seeking heart keeps you from living out your purpose in life and leads instead to sinful practices.

You have learned that the proud don't seek God (or have room for Him) and that self-seekers reject truth. Explain how, when you are self-seeking, you reject God's truth about an intimate relationship with Him. Also, how does a self-seeking life inhibit vulnerability with a spouse and with others?

Married men: You've now made a list of ways in which you were selfish. It's time to bring your wife into the process. That includes having "the talk" with her this weekend. Today, mark your calendar and invite her to set aside 30 to 60 minutes this weekend for "couch time." You can tell her that you want to share what you are learning in the Study, where you are at, and where you are going, because you want to rebuild trust and foster openness and honesty. (The weekend portion of this Study has a more detailed outline for you to use, so plan to review it before you sit down with her.)

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 22:36-39: “‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

WEEK SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Over the weekend, read *“My Purpose in Life”* in Appendix L. Spend time talking to God about your purpose in life. Reaffirm your commitment to meeting with the Lord daily.

If you have not already done so, read *“Joel’s and Tim’s Stories”* in Appendix Q. It will take some extra time to complete the weekend work, but it will lay a good foundation.

Married Men: Couch Time

Plan to have a regular “couch time” talks about what you are learning, how you are growing, and areas that remain tough for you. Here’s a suggested outline for this weekend’s talk.

Share with your wife your revelation of ways in which you have acted selfish. Look at the lists in the companion book at Chapter 7 for ideas, such as wanting to be waited upon, finding faults in others, being quick to justify your actions.

With respect to the specifics about sexual integrity lapses, such as porn or masturbation, don’t make her pry it out of you. She needs to understand the true scope of your lust problem. So tell her how often you look at porn or masturbate. Give her the true scope of the problem, including the temptations and triggers. But don’t give every detail of every woman you ever fantasized about. Before your meeting, you should read Appendix C to the companion book, “What do I tell my Wife or Fiancée?”

This talk will be painful for both of you, but necessary for the healing process. Secrets kill relationships because if you can’t reveal the current you and tell her your true struggles and trials, you really don’t have a true marriage and will never grow individually or collectively as a married couple.