

Wallace had a secret. He kept it for over twenty years. It went back to his preteen years when he pored over the pages of the Sears catalog. He graduated to increasingly coarse magazines in his teen and college years.

Wallace came to know the Lord in his late teens and saw many areas of his life transformed. He thought for a time that even his little secret was fully conquered, but eventually learned differently. Despite becoming a devoted father and later a deacon in the church, Wallace's secret continued, in the form of Internet exploring at work and at night.

The guilt, internal conflict, and shame of his double life made him feel he would explode. He prayed. He memorized Scripture. He fasted. He begged God for deliverance. He vowed many times that he would break his addiction and live a holy life before God. Although he had some longer periods of "victory," he failed every time.

One day in desperation, Wallace shared his secret with someone and began to get

spiritual help. That critical step was the beginning of his restoration to God, his wife, his friends, and himself.

Many believers today struggle with the lure of pornography and cannot gain victory over lust. Many who are secretly entangled with impurity were snared by exposure to pornography in their preteen or early teen years. They developed a pattern of secretive behavior, leading a double life. They appear to others as good Christians but continually experience guilt, internal conflict, and shame.

Too many Christians have been willing to exchange their birthright—their grand and rich position as heirs of glory with Christ—for moments of illicit sexual pleasure. Too many men and women of God have traded in their inheritance for a bowl of stew as Esau did.

Are you one of these? What is your secret? Are you desperate for help? There is hope. Restoration to God and others can happen. A focus on God and His glory is vital.

Can believers live victoriously in a sex-crazed society without being ensnared by pornography, sensuality, and lust? Yes, they can! But again, they must focus on God and His glory.

The Problem

We live in uniquely difficult days. Darkness is increasing. Depravity, corruption, moral rotteness, and perversions are escalating. Particularly in the area of sexual sins we see a growing lewdness and casting off of restraints. Inflamed, unbridled passions lead to exaggerated and perverted sexual behavior. Depravity and lusts have always been with us, but they seem to be intensifying, fueled and turbocharged by the glut of glamorized and embellished erotic material available with a click or a touch.

This explosion of pornographic material is caused by amazing advances in technology that have made such material easy to produce and readily available. *Technology*, in itself, is

amoral—neither good nor bad. *Technology* is defined as “the tools, machines, materials, techniques, and processes used to produce goods and services.” Technology serves wonderful purposes and has brought about much good. It is a part of today’s infrastructure that aids in sending the Gospel to all parts of the world.

However, technology also allows men to commit sins in more ways and more quickly than ever before. Our use of technology is not amoral. We are responsible for how we use technology. The hand that uses technology gives it moral content.

The Internet gives us the world at our fingertips. With it, all that the world has to offer—its systems and values—is almost instantly available. John reminds us that the whole world lies under the sway and control of the wicked one [1 John 5:19]. The Bible calls Satan “the ruler of this world,” “the god of this world [age],” and “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the

children of disobedience.” God’s people live in the world, but are not of it. Since we live in enemy territory, we do well to live carefully, diligently avoiding the snares and strategies of the adversary.

Satan hates God and His work. He hates us and wants us to be lost. He delights in robbing us of joy, messing up our lives, and spoiling our relationship with God. He is very aggressive; he will do everything he can to disrupt our abundant life in Christ.

Josh McDowell, speaking at the 2011 meeting of the American Association of Christian Counselors, said that he believes the pervasiveness of sexually immoral material on the Internet is the greatest threat the church, missions, and families face today.

Consider these 2011 statistics:

- 43% of Internet content was pornographic.
- Sex was the No. 1 topic searched on the Internet.
- 80% of 15- to 17-year-olds had multiple exposures to hard-core pornography.