

Sonny 2008

Ten years ago my wife died of cancer, leaving me alone with our two small children, one of which was 4 years old and the other was 13 months old. I had accepted Christ at a Promise Keeper's event in San Diego about two years before my wife died, but I was not really walking with the Lord. In fact pornography and marijuana were what I used to get me through those dark days. When I look back and think about it, porn was not my real problem. I had a deeper more fundamental problem. For you see, I was an adulterer, too. I had many affairs, both mentally and physically. My business took me to places with many exotic women; Rio, Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Belize, and various cities throughout the United States. I never said no to women when I was traveling. In fact, I couldn't keep myself from chasing them. I loved the hunt, and I was very good at keeping secrets.

After a few years I remarried, and even though I was very much in love with my new wife, I continued to pursue other women on the sly. It was about this time that online dating sites became popular. These websites allowed me to not only pursue women on business trips, but also at home, too. My relationship with my second wife became strained due to a variety of things including my unfaithfulness, and I found myself getting deeper and deeper into online relationships. My wife and I divorced and then I really began getting crazy. I was so crazy and embarrassed that I could not bring myself to share my problems with my accountability partners at my church. I would tell them some things, but certainly not everything. They knew of my struggle, but not the depth to which I had sunk. I had become the local single mom's booty call. I had a roommate (a good friend from college), who I would leave the kids with, and I would go and "service" for lack of a better word, the local single moms. That was my niche, I was a single dad, and I could relate to them, they trusted me, and I took advantage of their trust.

Five years ago, and right in the middle of my darkest days, I began dating an amazing woman. I fell head over heels in love with her and I asked her to marry me. It was a very romantic proposal, the mood and the location was perfect, and I had gotten her the engagement ring of her dreams. Everything was great, except that I was still cheating, I was still looking at porn, I was still lying to everyone, including myself. I had zero integrity at the personal and sexual level. Just before Valentine's Day of 2007 I got a call from my fiancé. She had been on my email to check some homework for my son and found some questionable emails that I had with other women. She was very upset, deeply hurt, and she called off our engagement. She told me that she never wanted to see me again and I was crushed.

There was something inside of me that wanted to chase women and watch porn, more than I loved my fiancé. Realizing this, I knew, right there and then, that I had a problem and I needed to ask for help. The first person I called

was one of the pastors from my church. I met with him later that afternoon. Following his suggestion I made an appointment to meet with a well respected Christian counselor, and also to speak with a man from my church who was involved with an organization called Operation Integrity. I phoned the guy from Operation Integrity right after I left the pastors office and I went to my first Operation Integrity meeting the very next evening. I was really nervous when I got there, but the other men made me feel very welcomed. I listened intently and I shared my story. I was amazed to hear how similar other men's struggles were to my own. That first night there were about four or five "me too" moments, and with that I knew that I was not alone anymore. I learned from that meeting that there were other men that loved the Lord our God, but who also struggled with pornography or adultery, like me. From that moment on I have quit posing and pretending.

I can now gladly say that I have been growing in faithfulness to my fiancée, to my children and to my Lord for the past 17 months. My fiancé has forgiven me and she has decided that she wants us to build our lives together, not apart. Since going to Operation Integrity I have not strayed back into my core problems. I have not sought other women, and when I have been tempted, God has given me the strength I needed to get away from the situation. It's not me, but the strength of the Holy Spirit that God has put inside me that has made this change in my life. I thank God that He has humbled me this way and that He gives me the opportunity to grow in my relationship with Him.

How is my struggle today? Well so far this morning, it's not too bad. Do I stumble? Not like I used to. I still catch myself every now and then looking at an attractive woman for too long, but I know that I am not lusting like I have in the past. I still have more work to do in order to deal with my struggles and my addictions, but I also know that I have had miraculous progress. My new life is a work of partnership between God and I. Miracles happen with the support and guidance our Father and his Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for listening.