

*Eternity Past*

*Eternity Future*

# The LandBetween

M I N I S T R I E S

*The mission of the LandBetween Ministries is to equip leaders to fulfill Christ's Great Commission of heart-focused discipleship in a broken world.*

Newsletter

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*“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”*

— Colossians 3:5

**“IT IS NOT GOOD TO EAT MEAT OR DRINK WINE OR DO ANYTHING THAT CAUSES YOUR BROTHER TO STUMBLE.” — ROMANS 14:21**

## Addiction: Porn & Alcohol

Addiction kills. Addictions kill marriages, careers, nations, and can lead to hopelessness and suicide.

### PORN ADDICTION

Those involved with pornography are idolaters and the Scriptures say they will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9). Most Christian men know Matthew 5:28 and Jesus' teaching that even to look at a woman lustfully means committing adultery in the heart.

But, according to a recent five-year national survey of churches, [conquerseries.com](http://conquerseries.com) reports that 68% of men and roughly 50% of pastors in American churches regularly engage porn. A neuropsychologist, Dr. Tim Jennings states, “Any type of repetitive behavior create trails in our brain that are going to fire on an automatic sequence.” Thus, the repeated viewing of porn actually changes the physical structure of the brain. Dr. James Wilder, Ph.D. has produced a DVD series on addictions and he shows how brain scans of porn addicts are very similar to a drug

addict's brain.

The destructive damage of porn on the relational center of the brain is one reason why wives of husbands who are porn addicts often feel as if there is a relational “wall” between them and their husbands. These women will often have the sense that their husbands are like a “stranger in their own home.” This addiction literally



creates a brain that is cut off from having the capacity to fully “be glad to be with” another person in a Christ-honoring way.

Porn addiction is one reason that relationships, single or married, are suffering.

Researchers and authors like Dr. Wilder have discovered that the “high” or elevation of mood that porn provides is just as, if not more, addictive than illicit drugs.

Porn addicts can get to the point where,

ironically, they have to get a “high” from porn and/or masturbation or they feel life is cheating on them.

Over time, if a husband is involved with pornography, his wife will no longer appear as attractive to him because his brain is re-wired to be attracted to media fantasies, images, and/or videos of people on his smartphone or other devices. His wife will sense something is wrong and can often show emotional concern. Then, the self-absorbed porn addict can falsely blame his wife and unjustly make her responsible for the lack of intimacy in their marriage. Instead of a man repenting and submitting to God (James 4:7) it is much easier for a self-absorbed man to seek self-pity for himself instead of honoring God and his wife with his body. Regardless of how much or little sex a wife gives her husband, no husband has an excuse to lust. God does not give a man an excuse for sexual sin, no matter the changes may have taken place during their marriage. But, to a male or female porn addict, they can rationalize their sin and come up with all kinds of excuses to violate God's Word, damaging themselves and others with their sexual sin.

The heaviest users of pornography in the

US are young men from the ages of 11-17. In the past fifteen years there has been a steady increase of female users of porn, who also masturbate. The future for this nation is dark unless there is sincere repentance.

The good news is that if a man or woman involved in porn turns away from their sin, their brains can heal. A spouse that may not have seemed attractive can be seen as a valued, treasured wife to love as a person made by God and not an object for a man to use.

A good source of help for any type of sexual addiction is a book by Dr. Harry Schaumburg, Ph.D, called, *“False Intimacy: Understanding the Struggle of Sexual Addiction.”* In this book, Dr. Schaumburg shares how sex addicts avoid real intimacy and the pain that might come from a real relationship. Thus, sex addicts use counterfeit forms of intimacy. Dr. Schaumburg writes, “Sex addicts typically justify their actions and believe their needs must be met... My desires need to be fulfilled if my life is going to be worth living.” (*False Intimacy*, 26).

However, if someone is truly born again (John 3:3), Christ has given them a new identity and they have no excuse to commit any type of sexual sin. Their true need is to believe and behave from their new identity in Christ. They will believe that God made people to be *loved*, not used as objects of lust.

A man needs to recognize that if Christ is in him (Colossians 1:27), he is a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and that from his new identity as God’s loved, valued son, no sexual temptation has to result in sin. A man who lives out God’s love from within will not lust.

## ALCOHOL ADDICTION

The Bible makes it clear that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21). A Proverb paints a vivid image of a fool that can be applied to an alcoholic or porn addict, “Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.” (Proverbs 26:11).

Alcoholics can be so lost into their addiction that stern warnings from Scripture and concerned loved ones will often not

persuade them to quit.

Is there hope for an alcoholic? Do they have to be defined by this “disease” that is often labeled, “incurable”? The story of Mike Quarrels and many others like him says, “Yes,” there is hope.

Mike Quarrels was a successful broker with E.F. Hutton and married to a dedicated Christian woman. Over time, Mike became an alcoholic. Mike tried to get help from many different sources, including memorizing Scripture, treatment centers, therapists, and Alcoholic Anonymous. He spent a lot of money and effort to get sober, but nothing worked. Mike even went to seminary and became a pastor. But, the more he tried *doing* various things to kick alcoholism, his alcoholism just became worse.

Mike shared his story of freedom from addiction in a book he wrote with Steve McVey titled, *“Helping Others Overcome Addictions: How God’s Grace Brings Lasting Freedom.”* Just before finding freedom Mike was listening to Bill Gillham’s teaching on being dead to sin (Romans 6). Mike thought, “*I’m not really dead to sin—that’s just a positional truth. That’s just what God says; it’s only how God sees me. Then it hit me: Truth is what God says, regardless of your feelings. Reality is how God sees you, regardless of your actions. I knew in that moment I was dead to sin and free from addiction.*” (*Helping Others...*, p. 49).

Mike was free from alcoholism when he gave up “doing” things to get free and started **believing** in Christ’s identity that Christ had already put in Mike’s life, which identified him as free.

After Mike found his freedom, a rescue mission director asked Mike what his program was to stay free from alcohol. Mike responded, “...to know I’m dead to sin and freed from it, and to trust Christ as my life and live by faith.” (p. 20). Mike did not let his dead “flesh” define who he was, but rather, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me...” (Galatians 3:4). If you are in Christ, the core of your identity is not a “sinner saved by grace” but a son or daughter of the living God. Churches that emphasize “sinner-ship” as the core identity of a believer instead of son-ship

or daughter-ship with Christ, are filled with addicts who live in miserable defeat.

Mike’s perspective on his true identity in Christ took away all his striving in the old, dead “flesh” that was crucified with Christ and this released Mike to live from his new identity: “Christ in me, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) and that made all the difference in Mike’s life. It sounds almost too simple, but Mike has seen many people freed from alcoholism and other addictions when they realize that all of their needs are met in Christ. Of course you need friendships, but others cannot replace Christ in you. Addicts are seeking love, worth, and acceptance, and Mike found his fleshly efforts for these things failed, but Christ was his freedom.

An alcoholic might think, “Well that’s nice that Mike became free, but I’m different.” The truth is that Mike’s story is not about Mike. The reason Mike was set free from alcoholism was because he stopped living life from his flesh identity and he stopped trying to “do” things on his own to free himself from alcoholism.

Mike realized that with Christ in him, he did not have to try to quit on his own strength. Living from the new identity and life that Christ put in to Mike, he no longer had to battle on his own to fight the urge to drink alcohol.

The main reason for not consuming alcohol is because Paul writes, “It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.” (Romans 14:21).

In our North American society, there is a lot of “stumbling” and “death” due to alcohol. Alcohol can be just as addictive as any drug; legal or illegal.

Although highly addicted, Mike came to believe that Christ was his life (Colossians 3:4) and that he had been crucified with Christ and that Mike no longer lived, but Jesus lived in him. Because of that, he could live by faith in the Son of God. The result of truly believing our identity is in Christ, will set each of us free.

*Joel Francis is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and Michigan State University.*

*The LandBetween Ministries is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2004.*