

EX SEXUAL ADDICTION DISCLOSURE

Dear Lisa,

This is one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do. I must admit that I have struggled with sexual behavior outside of our marriage. I have been actively deceiving you regarding my secret sin, as you have asked me about it on multiple occasions. I must confess to you I broke the fidelity of our marriage. My sin is against God, you, our family and friends. There is no excuse for my actions and I am fully responsible for their impact. It is important, as part of my confession, that I actively engage in giving you the details of my actions. While this is a painful process, it is necessary, as any real healing will be built on a foundation of truthfulness. This letter will serve as a clear outline of my infidelity, allowing a difficult and ambiguous situation to be made very clear. You are welcome to ask me any questions needed, and my job is to answer you fully with patience and honesty.

I first came into contact with pornography at the age of 14, while visiting my cousin on his farm. His father, my uncle, kept Playboy magazines in the barn. These materials were hidden, but my cousin had found them and showed the magazines to me. For the rest of the time I was visiting them, I found time to sneak out and look at them. I remember feeling guilty and ashamed, but also excited. I would tell myself I wasn't going to go back to look again, but couldn't seem to stop myself. I thought this is might just be something men do but don't talk about. The problem continued throughout my teenage years. I had friends at school who had magazines they were willing to share with me. It became a dirty little secret I kept, while feeling guilty about it all the time. My parents and other adults in my life never knew. I felt so much shame and would promise myself and God I would stop. On occasion I would stop for a month or two, but would then find my way back to pornography. I was incredibly discouraged and felt so alone. I was also confused because if so many guys I knew were doing this I thought maybe it was something you were not supposed to do but guys all did in secret.

Upon leaving for college, I found a new outlet for myself. The internet was really catching on at that point and one evening, in my dorm room, I had the idea to search for nudity online. I had heard other guys talking about it. Initially, I kept telling myself I would not try to look at porn online. I prayed about it and committed to God I would not go down this path. However, there was no one else who I was relying on to help me stay pure. The results of my online search were profound. I had discovered a new way of accessing more pornography than imaginable from the privacy of my room. I felt a mix of excitement and utter hopelessness.

You and I met in our second year of college at the campus Christian organization. At this time, I was viewing porn 2-3 times per week and masturbating. Of course, this was not something I shared with you. Instead, I tried to present as if I had everything together, to impress you and show you that I was the kind

of guy you were looking for. I also lied to myself at this point, telling myself I did not need to tell you. I reasoned that we were not married and if we did get married, I would no longer have this problem. After all, we would be able to be sexually active, so I surely wouldn't be tempted. I was also afraid to tell anyone about the struggle. I was alone, repenting one day and struggling the next.

Once our relationship became more serious, I struggled again with the need to tell you. However, I chose again to deceive myself that I would quit if we were going to get married, and as a result, deceived you once more. Once, while we were sitting together in the park we liked to go to together, I remember you asking me point blank if I had ever struggled with porn. I exploited your trust in me by lying and telling you I had briefly struggled with it in high school but no longer did. Your trust in me was a gift, one that I have heard you refer to lately as stupidity. I wish you could see your trusting was not foolish, it was my deception of you that was wrong.

I must also confess that within a month prior to us getting engaged, I began viewing porn and masturbating on a nearly daily basis. Previous to this, I had been pushing physical boundaries in our relationship relentlessly. You complained about it and we had several conversations, but I was not exercising self-control away from you in my private life, so I had no character to draw from when I was with you. I upped my porn use and convinced myself that this would be a temporary solution for trying to get you to go too far physically in our relationship. Rather than being the man God has called me to be, I doubled down in my sin. As a result, I did refrain from pushing you, but it was because I was becoming more committed to porn. I continued porn used nearly daily until our wedding.

At my bachelor party, some of my friends made jokes about preparing for marriage by going to an adult store. I joked about doing this, underneath hoping we would all go while telling ourselves it was just a joke. Unfortunately, my friends did use this as an excuse to take me, and we went. I entered the store and pretended I thought this place was a joke, but the truth was, inside I was completely giving myself to lust. We bought a few items, the ones I showed you and we joked about on our honeymoon. You didn't realize the whole time the dark side of what had happened. In the initial three months of our marriage, I did not look at porn, as we were in our honeymoon phase and sex with you was consuming and amazing. I was praising God at this time, thinking that I had been delivered and the trial was over.

However, after that first three months, I began accessing porn on our newly acquired smart phones. They provided me the privacy I needed to operate. Initially, it was once every few weeks, but within 2 months, I was looking 4 to 5 times per week and masturbating. I obviously could not perform sexually in our marriage, and you asked me about this several times. I pretended to be shocked as you and after a few months, I went to the doctor. Once again, I deceived you and exploited your trust for me by carrying on as if this must be some medical issue. Of course, the results came back from the doctor and he told me I was fine medically. What I did not tell you was upon giving me my test results, he asked me about how much porn I was watching. He didn't even ask if I was, he just asked how much. I didn't answer, and he told me that would need to be addressed and recommended that I be honest with you. I lied later about the

appointment, telling you they would be getting back with me later about the results and considering testosterone treatment.

Things intensified from there. Approximately one year after our marriage, I began frequently adult stores at a rate of about one time per month for the next 2 years. I purchased masturbation sleeves and silicone versions of female body parts for masturbation (breasts & vagina). I hid these items in the garage where I was sure you would not look. I was also continuing regular porn use and masturbation at a rate of anywhere from 2 to 5 times per week. I also went to a strip club on my first business trip for work, the one you were so excited about for me. It was the trip to Atlanta. I had begun researching strip clubs a month prior and viewing their live show cameras. Some of those clubs allow you brief free videos of their dancers to entice you to visit or to purchase full length content. Going to a strip club had always been a line I thought I would never cross, but I did cross it.

While in Atlanta I visited the club, paying a \$100 cover charge and \$1500 on private lap dances with two of the dancers at a time. Each of these sessions were 15 minutes long and cost \$750. I was allowed to touch the dancers, in addition to their touching me. I am sad to say that I placed my hands on them. I paid for and received one of these sessions each of the two nights I went to the club. Since I handled the finances and was making good money, I hid this from you. However, when you wanted to do some decorating to our new house, this was the reason I said we could not afford it. You were so understanding and even comforted me that you knew I was trying my best to provide for us. I felt incredible guilt, but in my mind I had gone too far now, I could never back out or confess.

I began traveling regularly to Atlanta that year, once every 4 to 6 weeks for the next two years. Each time I went down, I frequented the same club and developed a familiarity with the people who owned it, purchasing at least one lap dance each time I was there. After the first year, they could see I was willing to pay for sexual services and told me that I could have a "complete experience" with a dancer of my choosing if I wanted. They prided themselves on being a "high-end gentlemen's club" and stated their girls were worth a premium and tested for STD's regularly to ensure men's safety. I said I was very interested and that evening, the dancer I selected was at my hotel room door. I paid her \$800 to have sex with me with a condom. The next month I was down, I did the same thing, but this time was told if I paid \$1,000 it could be unprotected sex. I agreed and from that point on, I was paying \$1,000 a trip, skipping the strip club all together, and having different dancers come to my hotel. I also took out a private credit card and began racking up debt. To cover this, I took out a home equity loan on our home without your knowledge in the amount of \$50,000. That second year I paid for sex with a dancer 2-3 times each trip. I stopped justifying what I was doing and simply operated in a place of hopelessness. Again, in my mind I was already lost and had gone too far.

I had two girls in particular I enjoyed being with and had sex with each of them about 8 times. I did not talk with these girls about you, our marriage, or family. Instead, it was all about flirting and partying. I

want to be clear, what I liked about them was how they were able to make me feel, like a rock-star or celebrity. This totally fake interaction made them my top choices. I did not feel a caring connection between any of the girls and myself. The rest of the dancers were either once or twice. I was on top of the world in my mind. My career looked like it was going to continue going to new heights, money was quick and easy. I had long since stopped feeling much of anything. Instead, I was amazed at my ability to have such a secret life. It was like I became able to turn off my emotions around this and any time the shame inside started to surface, I quickly distracted myself.

Meanwhile, at home, I was more and more depressed and withdrawn. This came out many times as being easily irritated. I was short with you and the kids, all while not giving you love or support. The world had lost all its color for me. The only times I felt alive became when I was planning to or in the process of acting out.

However, this all changed at the end of that second year. I began struggling at work in sales, and with the market lagging, the seemingly endless cash flow dried up. I remember you telling me it was like a switch was flipped in my head. I was more irritable, distant, and hopeless than ever. You kept trying to tell me things would be all right but that was because you did not realize the debt problem I had created. I had spent all \$50,000 in home equity and maxed out a credit card of \$25,000. I was in serious trouble. By March of year three, I was let go from my company and at my wits end. I made plans to run away, to disappear. That's when you happened to come home in the middle of the day, for no apparent reason. I believe it was God. You found me with the car packed in the driveway. I broke and told you I had created some debt with using porn and poor business decisions. I did not confess everything to you, but enough that I felt relief. We made our counseling appointment and now we are here today.

I have now shared the complete story of all my actions. They are fully my responsibility. I committed the sin of adultery and am completely responsible for my actions. I actively deceived you on a regular basis, doing great damage to the trust in our relationship. I have heard you say things like perhaps you were too trusting or not wise enough. You should not ask those questions. The truth is, I exploited your love and trust to my advantage. Those were precious gifts of yours you shared with me and I am deeply saddened to hear you question them as being wrong. I was wrong. I manipulated you and robbed our family. I also exposed you physically to disease and STD's. I abandoned you and our children. I am connecting to my emotions now, and the pain I feel at what I have done is overwhelming. I am not saying this for any sympathy, but for you to know what I have done and it's impact matter to me. I am devastated inside. My sin has no excuse. I am writing this confession, to offer the truth, as a beginning step to reconciling our relationship and my relationship with God. I am giving my word, which I understand will have little value to you at this time, that I am committed to changing and walking with you, allowing God to heal us and our relationship. Right now, it is not reasonable or loving for me to ask you to make a decision on our relationship or to forgive me. Instead, I am going to show-up, day after day, in our marriage and family as the man God has for me to be. I am going to allow Him to grow me and restore me.

This is a commitment I am making to God even if you choose not to reconcile with me. I have hurt you terribly, and you deserved none of it. However, I am saying today that I am going to change and ask for the chance to demonstrate my surrender to God's will to you.

With All My Love & Sincerity,

Michael