

# Freedom From Pornography: James' Testimony

James Jennings | *illbehonest.com*

As Mephibosheth said to David, "Why should you pay regard to me, a dead dog?" (2 Samuel 9:8) and that was after David had said "You shall eat at my table all the days of your life." I say the same, why did the Lord pay regard to me, a dead dog, a flea, a worm? I don't know, I start to say I don't know why he paid regard to me, but I do because Is. 43:7 says that He saved me, He formed me, He made me for his glory, and that God would be glorified. That's why I am here testifying today, because I believe that the Lord will be glorified through me testifying to the great salvation that's been all of the grace of God. I just pray the Lord helps me to make much of Christ as I mention things from my past and where I'm at now.

I grew up in the church, and around 5 or 6 years old, I said the sinner's prayer on my grandmother's step inside of her house, I remember where it was at. I remember years going on after that, my hope of salvation was in that prayer, me accepting Jesus. I would always go back to that. I'd remember that spot, I would think about it and grab some assurance from there and hope in that. My hope wasn't in Christ. My solid rock was not Him. I was trusting in a frame that appeared to be sturdy but it was going to let me down in the end.

And so around 12 years old, I started going to the grocery store with my mom, before then, but around that time, I started to take notice of the magazines in the check-out aisles [cashier lines] and at 12 years old I got heavily addicted to pornography and for the next 9 years of my life, I was a slave of it, whether it would be from the Internet or the magazines, or wherever it would be. I was living for lust. It was what drove me [controlled], it was what satisfied me. The incredible thing is that no matter how much you get, it will always leave you empty.

One of the greatest, I guess, deceitful things about any sin, is the pursuit of the sin. As you're pursuing the sin, there is exhilaration and excitement, but once you gain the sin, and you satisfy yourself with the sin, then it just leaves you barren and empty. As I heard once said, "Sin will take you farther than you ever want to go, keep you longer than you ever want to stay, and cost you more than you ever wanted to pay."

And so around 18 years old - you know, in middle school, my parents took me out and homeschooled me. I lied. I didn't do any high school basically, I played video games for 15-16 hours a day for 5, 6 years of my life. That was all I did. I played games. I had more joy being a video game character and worrying about the level-ups and the gear that my character had than my real life character.

When I was 18, my parents forced me to get my driver's license because I didn't even want to drive. I wanted to sit at home, in that computer playing games all day long. That was my god, my idol, and it went hand in hand with Internet and pornography because that computer -- I was there, literally in my heart, bowing down and worshiping that as my god. And you know what? I look back now and I see, man, I was a fool. I was going to gain that and lose my soul for all of an eternity.

Well, around 18 years old, I really hated the sin of pornography. I mean the shame, the guilt that it caused in my life - it really made me miserable. I would be on my face crying out to God, saying, "God, I will never do this again." But I kept going right back to it. I was consumed, I was controlled by it. The impulses that came upon me to pursue sin - well, they absolutely controlled me and I really striving to get free. I remember doing courses, I remember getting internet filters. And at 18 years old, I had a burden to put a testimony up, because I had been free of pornography maybe 30-something days. And I put an audio testimony up in a video on YouTube. This is at 18, this is three years before God saved me, 3 years before I started illbehonest.com I remember I put that up, and I began falling back into the sin. And I deleted it - I took it down. And I kept trying to pursue freedom from pornography.

Here's something I want to emphasize is, and it's so huge -- my god was freedom, my god was not Christ. I was pursuing freedom instead of pursuing Christ. The reason I was going to go to hell was obviously my sin, but the big idol was freedom. I wanted to be free of pornography, to be free of masturbation so badly. I wanted to get it out of my life. I remember a relationship I was in I thought, "Well, if I ever marry this person, how will I ever live with myself, being married and still looking at pornography." I thought "I don't want to be in a situation like that." So I had all of this worldly grief, as 2 Cor. 7:10 says. All of this worldly grief that was motivating my pursuit of freedom. It was not Christ. I had not seen the cross as precious at all. I was totally deceived.

Another place I gained false assurance from was in Romans 7 where Paul said he did the things he did not want to do. And I remember other people in my life, even youth pastors, and people, they would give me assurance I was saved, because of what Paul said in Romans 7. And I can look back now and realize that Paul was talking about when he was a Pharisee. Of course Paul wanted to be free of these sins, because his perfection was in pursuit of the law. It was a works salvation and in the end, he says, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" And it's Christ! And as you go into Romans 8:13, you see that by the Spirit that we put to death the deeds of the flesh, and if we don't, we will die.

I remember growing up, I'd read Matthew 5:30, about how if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out, or chop off your arm, or you'll go to hell. You know what's crazy? Me and all my friends would read that passage, and we would think, "That can't mean what it means, because if it does, it means we're going to hell. But we're Christians! We said the prayer. We believe in Jesus, we go to church." So we would take that text and say, it cannot mean... If you take 1 Cor 6:9 -- it says, "don't be deceived, the sexually immoral will NOT inherit the kingdom of God," and I remember I thought, "Well, that can't mean what it means because then that means I am going to hell, that means I am not inheriting the kingdom of God." And the issue was I would look at all of my friends, and most of them appeared just like me. And so I thought, "Well, they're all Christians, I'm a Christian." And I was not looking at this standard, this Book, this Bible.

So my plea to you guys out there today is -- Look at this book, look at the Bible. Does your life add up to this? Have you truly been born again, and saved? Have you been regenerated? You know, regeneration, in Ezekiel 36, it says - The desolate lands that were once barren as wastelands will now be like the garden of Eden. And God comes in there and says "I'm going to take out the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, I'm going to give you

a new spirit and I am going to cause you to walk and obey my statutes." (36:27) And lo and behold - that wasn't a reality in my life.

And at 21, I believed myself to be saved, I was lost. I started going to a Bible study one night. I started to have an interest in the Word of God. I started to talk to all the guys in the church about "We've got to get free of pornography and masturbation." "What's this going to take?" We had Safe Eyes, we had the internet filters, we did the 60 day courses. None of it was working. Well, we weren't saved. That's why it wasn't working.

I went home and I remember I walked in the living room and my family was sadly watching some TV show Deal or No Deal, that has all these supermodels on it, and I looked for one second and I saw a model and all these thoughts of lust flooded my mind and I went back to my room. Sitting in my room, I just felt the lust overcome me, the thoughts - I couldn't take them captive. I look back now and I realize that I didn't have the Spirit of God in me. I was going to open up my browser to view pornography and instead, I went and checked my facebook - and someone who had been at the Bible study that night, who I knew my whole life, I had never talked to them, they sent me a message saying: "James." They just listed all of these positive things like, "It's incredible what God's done in your life," and on and on.

I sat there and I realized that God had done nothing in my life. It was all a work of James Jennings. I had worked so hard to clean the outside of the cup, yet I had no new heart from God. I wasn't born again. And I can remember that night I cried out to God and He saved me. I finally gave up my works-based salvation. I remember it was so easy to say "I'm saved by faith alone in Christ," yet to be doing a works-based salvation, trying to merit my acceptance before God by my freedom. I was always talking about freedom from pornography when I was lost, because that was my god. And now - you know - to have the preciousness of Christ - to know that He became sin for me and He suffered the wrath of God. God slaughtered His only Son on the cross for my sins personally. That is just incredible, it's amazing.

I didn't realize I was saved that night. I had freedom from pornography and masturbation. I was no longer a slave to it. Yet months later, when I really came to realize the doctrine of regeneration, what it meant to be born-again. I realized, "Whoa - I wasn't saved at 6." You know, I get so many people through illbehonest.com - Maybe someone who's 50 years old, and they've said, "Well I've been saved since I was 6 - and I've been a slave of pornography for 40 years of my life, and I'm a Christian." And I said the same thing. My friend, you're not a Christian. I wasn't a Christian. Romans 6:18 says, "We've been set free from sin and become slaves of righteousness." 2 Cor. 5:17 says "If you are in Christ, you are a new creature. The old is passed away, the new has come." And you know why? It says in verse 18 "All of this is from God."

And that's what happened, that night - the living God... The living God invaded my life. I had the battleships of the Spirit of God, they pulled up alongside my little fortress of sin and they unloaded with all full force upon my little fortress, and it demolished it. That was 3 years ago and God did that radical work. And ever since then, you know what? There are landmines all around me and every step counts. I make a wrong step, and you know, just like David, when he made a wrong step and fell into adultery and fell into murder. Christians do fall, we're not perfect. But I tell you, I am not what I used to be. I am a slave of Christ. It's my greatest joy to serve Him. He's

my Master. I can't believe it!... that for 21 years my master was the computer. That's just stupid. It's incredible. Yet God had mercy on me. He pays regard to me - a dead dog.

And the Lord disciplines the ones whom He loves, like Hebrews 12 says. He comes in there with a rod, and He will break us of self and show us that we can't rely on self. The root of everything it is a heart issue. The reason I was going to pornography was that I was selfish. And the reason I was using, at a point, Illbehonest used to be a ministry where I would gain my joy from my performance. You see, you can make anything a god. You can make freedom from sexual sin a god. You can make anything a god - and that's what I had done. So I challenge you guys out there - examine your hearts, because everything is a heart issue, it always goes back to the heart. And that's so important to realize. Because we must pursue the Lord, As I heard brother Bob say, "With no strings attached to the world." Everything out of the way. I hope this encourages you guys out there.

It blows my mind that God saved me and allowed me to start out Illbehonest.com and allowed it not to be a disaster. I was going into too much heresy, I remember when I got saved I was getting into all this emergent church stuff. I thank God that He was faithful to me and to bring me back to this book, to lead me away from men and to God. And that's -- praise the Lord for that. The Lord saved me from pursuing freedom instead of Christ. And for 18 years of my life I was totally hardened to all of the truth and just slept in church. And once I got enlightened that "I need freedom," I pursued freedom and not Christ. If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. But it's "the Son who sets you free." It is not your own self. We must give up on our own power. Jeremiah 17:5 says "Cursed is the man who makes flesh his strength, but (7) blessed is the man whose trust is in the Lord."

I trust in the Lord to continue to sanctify me, to break me. I can't believe the work that God has done in the last two years of breaking me of self. When I got saved, I felt like I had no struggles at all. And the Lord showed me, "James, you got a heart issue here, a heart issue there" and things that I never thought were sins, the Lord was showing me Those who endure to the end will be saved (Matt 24:13). Those who endure in a love relationship with Jesus Christ, and He is so worthy of it. So pursue Him with all your heart, soul and mind.

Do not waste your life. If the Lord could save me, someone who played video games for 15 hours a day, a slave of pornography, I was so shy I wouldn't talk to anyone. I would on the internet, I would talk to people on audio chat. But in person I would put a mask on and I lived a totally false life. If God could save me and then use me to start a website like illbehonest.com and use me to do anything at all, I mean, that's just the grace of God. I have no credit for anything that's happened. Everything goes right back to Him. I just want to encourage you guys. This is your one life. We are never going to live again. This life is going to end in a moment. Tomorrow's not granted. We don't know the hour the Lord will return, it's a vapor, it's blowing by so fast the waterfall of the end of your life is going to come so soon. And I tell you -- be ready for the drop -- the drop into eternity. I don't fear death at all. I mean "Death, you know, where's your sting." I have the blood of Christ all over my account!

I don't fear death, I fear God, I need a greater fear of the Lord, I do. And I pray that by God's grace none of this was done in the flesh. And that it will edify and encourage, and you know I am just a worm and a dead dog, I am nothing at all. And I don't say that because I know I should, I say it because it's true. So please, listen, if you are dabbling in pornography, if you're

still in sexual sins, If your still falling into masturbation, put those things to death by the Spirit! And if it's not getting put to death, ask yourself "Do you have the Spirit?" Don't take Matthew 5:30 lightly. If it causes you to sin it's going to drag you to hell. And some of you may be free of those things and you got some freedom, but your god is the freedom and it's not Christ! And that will send you to hell.

What are you boasting in? What am I boasting in? One thing - that He who knew no sin became sin for me. That in Him I can be made right with God. (2 Cor 5:21) I am presentable before God for one reason -- the blood of Christ. His blood covers my account in full, and he died on my behalf, to cleanse me of every lawless deed, and purify for Himself a people who are zealous for good works.(Titus 2:14) And so I am trying to do that. Oh, I need the Lord's help. I failed him in many ways, but I'll tell you this -- I always go back to Him. And that's where the hope is found. My eyes are ever towards the Lord (Psalm 25:15) He will pluck my feet out of the net.

So praise God. So be encouraged, again. And Lord, help us to run. "Only one life," as CT Studd said "...and it will soon be past, and only what's done for Christ will last." "And some want to be within the mile of a chapel bell, but I want to run a rescue ship a yard from hell." And the Grace House and I'll Be Honest, I guess that's my rescue ship for now. And the main thing I need to be rescued from is myself. Every day. Oh Lord, kill me, crucify me, take away all self. Let it all be for Christ and His glory. So let us press on -- As Hosea 6:3 says, "Let us know -- let us press on to know the Lord." So Amen.