

# **BATTLE ON, BATTLE OVER**

**How Every Man and Woman Can Find  
Permanent and Total Victory in Sexual Purity**

**Brenda & Fred Stoeker**

**with Mike Yorkey**

***Battle On, Battle Over: How Every Man and Woman Can Find Permanent and Total Victory in Sexual Purity***  
**by Brenda & Fred Stoeker with Mike Yorkey**

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# Introduction

by Fred Stoeker

**D**o you yearn for freedom from sexual sin? Sexual immorality is a brutal master, enslaving many a soul. Sadly, most never truly engage in a battle of liberation.

Suppose you're one of those men or women hungry for sexual freedom. If that's the case, it wouldn't surprise me if there are two discouraging questions swirling in your heart and mind, stirring up doubt, checking your advance, and suspending any possible progress. They are:

1. Is sexual freedom even possible?
2. Why even engage in this battle? When I look around me, purity seems as rare in churchgoers as it is for everyone else.

Well, that's true. But that doesn't mean purity is impossible. Your battle with sexual sin *can* be over. But not within the context of those two troubling, faith-crunching questions churned up by the cultural lies about human sexuality established all around you and, quite probably, *in* you. If you believe these lies, your battle will likely never be over. Here are some of the biggest falsehoods and excuses we often say to ourselves:

- This battle for purity will rage on endlessly until I take my final breath.
- Not everyone can walk in sexual purity. Only some are given the grace to do so.
- 98 percent of men admit they struggle with their sexual purity, and the other 2 percent are lying.
- The Covid-19 pandemic really messed me up. With all the social isolation, I had to get release somewhere.
- Porn isn't so bad, as long it's "ethically produced" and only used to release sexual pressure.
- God would never have made us sexual beings only to ask us to abstain from sex outside of marriage. We must be missing something.

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Likely you've believed one or all of these fallacies—or at least thought about them. It's likely also that they've restrained you from engaging in the battle with an attitude of optimism, hope, and faith. You cannot wage a war for purity in a climate of lies and justifications that cause doubts to pile up ceaselessly and bind your heart and feet. So don't accept these lies surrounding you. Don't focus on the failures of those surrounding you or the difficult times we're living in.

Instead, find the truth and fixate on that. Establish it in your heart and mind. If you launch from a position of truth, your battle can soon be over.

But you might ask, *Where do I find truth?*

Gratefully, you have a loving older brother in the faith named Simon Peter, who unquestionably knew truth from lies. As he neared the end of his life, he diligently set apart time to write a deeply personal letter to you, his beloved Christian sibling, to refute these very lies and to make sure you could recall the truth after he was gone, just as any good older brother would do:

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. (2 Peter 1:12–15, NIV)

Peter kicked off his letter to you with a reminder that your faith is every bit as precious as his own. This wasn't just a buttery warm greeting for you to skim over to get to the meat of the letter. Peter was opening with an unshakable, established truth:

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (2 Peter 1:1–2, NIV)

Peter was one of the original twelve apostles, an eyewitness to Christ's entire ministry. He was taught directly by Jesus Himself for three solid years, face to face, day by day, moment by moment. Peter absolutely knew what Jesus knew about your faith—it is as precious as the faith of any of the apostles. That truth about your faith is foundational to your destiny as a sexually pure man, so Peter wanted you to know that truth as conclusively as he knew it and to accept this following priceless truth just as unconditionally:

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His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3–4, NIV)

That's established truth. Your battle may be on, but it can also be over. You can be free of sexual sin, despite the lies proclaimed throughout the milling, teeming throngs of failing men surrounding you. Your faith is equal in worth to the faith of Peter, and this faith, which was delivered freely to you with the Lord's divine power, has given you everything you need to escape your own illicit sexual desires.

You. Can. Be. Free.

Now, if that is true (and it is), what is your responsibility in establishing this victory for keeps? Thankfully, your diligent and loving older brother didn't leave you hanging, as Simon Peter immediately continued his thoughts by reminding you that you too must be diligent, in this case by adding some things to your precious faith so that you might confirm it and mature it:

[Since you have the Lord's divine power], make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. (2 Peter 1:5–9, NIV; words inside brackets added for clarity)

If you haven't added knowledge, self-control, and perseverance to your precious faith, your eyes have likely been closed to the truth, and it's unlikely you're participating in the divine nature and escaping the corruption in the world caused by your sexual desires.

But such blindness changes nothing, as the truth remains clear as day. It doesn't matter if your friends or your teammates or your favorite podcasters are saying something different. You have a faith as precious as that of Simon Peter, and you have Christ's divine power that, when coupled with a deep knowledge of Jesus Christ and His precious promises, should end your battle. If your battle is still raging on, then you're lacking one thing—you haven't added knowledge, self-control, and perseverance to your faith.

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I can help you to do just that. As part of that process, I'll spotlight a major vulnerability in your sexuality that sets you up to fall into sexual sin, one that's prominent in both men and women. I didn't discuss this weakness in my first book, *Every Man's Battle*, where I focused entirely upon the flaws in the male eyes and the mind. That's why I've written *Battle On, Battle Over*—to spotlight this *second* major vulnerability in our human sexuality and to add even more knowledge to your faith. Happily, whether male or female, you can permanently shut down your sexual sin with a disciplined, maturing faith like Peter spoke of in his letter to you.

Near the beginning of that letter, Peter declared that he was making every effort in *his* life to remind you of the truth so that you could always remember it, even after he was gone, even if lies were swirling around you. Near the end of that same letter, Peter exhorted you to make every effort in *your* life to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with the Lord (see 2 Peter 3:14). He also implored you to make every effort to add knowledge, self-control, and perseverance to your faith (see 2 Peter 1:5–9) so that you might escape the corruption of this world.

Your destiny rests on these truths, not upon the cultural lies bandied about your church, your work, or your exercise club. You are *not* a slave to depravity or to the sexual urges that have mastered you in the past (see 2 Peter 2:19). Your destiny is to walk in the divine nature, well above the sexual fray. It is your destiny to walk in the truth that your brother Peter worked so hard to help you remember.

Since Peter made every effort in his letter to you to remind you that you must be diligent in maturing your precious faith so that you can be free from this battle, and since I'm making every effort in this book to give you the rest of the knowledge you need to establish self-control and perseverance in your life, will *you* now make every effort to apply this knowledge and to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with your Lord in your sexuality?

I hope so. Freedom is glorious, and freedom is yours to establish.

And remember, it's not just me that's making this declaration. Peter said it, unequivocally, in his letter to you. And so it only seems right to close this introduction with the very same words that Simon Peter used to close that letter to you:

Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. (2 Peter 3:17–18, NIV)

# 1

## Where Was Victory?

From Fred

**I**t was midnight.

I sat down heavily in my office chair and leaned forward over my desk, cupping my forehead in my cool, moist palms, still damp from washing away the evidence of one more failure a moment earlier. Desperation and frustration oozed from every pore as I slapped my right hand to the desktop and cried out, “Why can’t I kill this thing?”

My racing mind stalled for a moment as my words echoed back lamely in my mind. Silence settled in again as I struggled with the utter confusion of it all. Clenching my teeth, I groaned deeply, my soul writhing in pain.

*I hate this masturbation! I’m such a lousy Christian, such a loser! What is wrong with me?*

Yet the practice refused to go away, no matter how much I despised it.

I leaned back against my chair with a frustrated sigh. Out of nowhere, my wife, Brenda, popped into my thoughts. She was nestled softly in a cloud of sheets and comforters a few blocks to the west, where I’d tucked her into our bed with a warm kiss before heading off to my office to catch up on some work. A small smile curled over my lips as I thought about the passion and fun we’d shared the night before in the midst of that soft bedding, musing, *I’m so lucky! She enjoys sex as much as I do and rarely says no.*

Another jarring surge of emotions crashed back over my heart, harshly sweeping my smile away. *Then why do you masturbate when you’re not with her?* I jeered scornfully.

I had no answer. But the urge wouldn’t let up.

I’d spent an endless number of agonizing, twisting nights at my office over

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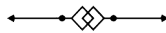
the past number of months, pummeling myself over the losses that mounted despite my broad, dramatic early victories in this fight known as “every man’s battle.” I’d done everything God said to do, like guarding my eyes from all the sensual junk around me and starving my mind of lust. The losses should have stopped, but they hadn’t.

I couldn’t make sense of what I was dealing with as I sat alone in my office, utterly confused one more time. You see, I’d always believed that once I’d stopped gorging my sex drive through my eyes and my lust-crazed mind, I’d finally own my sexuality once and for all. Total victory would be mine.

And I *had* stopped. My eyes and mind *were* under control. So where was my unequivocal and permanent victory?

*I should own my sexuality by now! I should not be masturbating anymore! What more must I do?*

I had already accomplished so much on the battlefield, but that might have been expected. After all, my lust-filled thought life *had* been a target-rich environment, given my visual habits. My eyes had been relentless sensual heat-seekers, roaming freely over every curvy form or flank in view. I’m talking about full-bosomed young women in figure-hugging tops and skintight yoga pants that leave nothing to the imagination. Tanned beach babes in thong-like bikinis tracing the sandy edges of Georgia’s coastal waters each summer. Silky soloists at church with the long, leggy slits up their skirts. The sensual sights always kept my sex drive humming at a high idle, only momentarily pacified whenever I pleased myself.



At one time, masturbation was as regular as shaving in my life, as much a part of my daily routine as popping multivitamins with my orange juice and peanut-butter toast. There was no real respite, even on Sunday mornings, because shapely models in push-up bras beckoned my eyes while I perused the *Des Moines Register’s* lingerie ads in the department store inserts. Weekday mornings were just as bad during my morning commute since I could easily spot lithe, trim female joggers in their sleek black bodysuits running along the shoulder. On road trips, I watched exercise shows in my hotel room, where “hard body” female hosts always seemed to work on their inner thighs for the camera.

That’s how life was during those awful days. I *wanted* to change, *knew* I should change, but my eyes were so far out of control that there was no way to kill my masturbation habit. Sure, I was attending church, reading my Bible, and checking all the boxes that labeled me a Christian, but this was the one area of my life that I couldn’t tame.

I certainly understood that the apostle John told us that God’s grace was



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always there to forgive us when we fall, but he also told us that it was ridiculously senseless to settle for that as a way of life. If we say we are Christ's, we should walk in the same manner He walked (see 1 John 2:1–6). I didn't want to ladle grace over things every time I blew it. I wanted to stop sinning in the first place. I wanted to live up to the Lord's standards for me as a man.

But I didn't know what to do. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit *always* knows what to do, and He took me through a life-changing moment while I was driving along a key four-lane thoroughfare on the edges of my hometown of Des Moines, Iowa.

It all started when I saw her jogging on the side of the road, coming my way on the left. My eyes zeroed in on her bouncing breasts, and I took it all in lustily. If you read my first book, *Every Man's Battle*, perhaps you'll recall how I described what happened next:

I remember the moment—the exact spot on Merle Hay Road—when it all broke loose. I'd failed God with my eyes for the thirty-millionth time. My heart churned in guilt, pain, and sorrow. For months, even years, I felt like such a loser. Lousy Christian. Like a pervert, even. Driving down Merle Hay Road, I suddenly gripped the wheel, and through clenched teeth, I yelled out: "That's it! I'm through with this! I'm making a covenant with my eyes. I don't care what it takes, and I don't care if I die trying. It stops here. It stops here!"

... I can't describe how much I meant it. Floods of frustration from years of failure poured from my heart. I'd just had it! I wasn't fully convinced I could trust myself even then, but I'd finally and truly engaged the battle. Through my covenant with my eyes, all my mental and spiritual resources were now leveled upon a single target: my impurity.

Once a man truly engages this battle for sexual purity for the first time, as I did on Merle Hay Road that day, he releases the Holy Spirit to work freely on the matter. Man, does He ever get focused! Within hours, He reminded me of a forgotten fact I'd learned about pornography and a male's eyes back in my Human Sexuality class at Stanford University, where I earned my undergraduate degree. In that sex-ed class, I learned that guys draw gratification through their eyes from the sensuality around them. This sensuality becomes a lusty fuel line that guns their sexual engines endlessly. I said it this way in *Every Man's Battle*:

For males, impurity of the eyes is sexual foreplay. That's right. Just like stroking an inner thigh or rubbing a breast. Because foreplay is any sexual action that naturally takes us down the road to intercourse. Foreplay ignites passions, rocketing us by stages until we go all the way.

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No wonder my masturbation was out of control, and no wonder the Lord immediately pressed me to do something to control my eyes! The Holy Spirit was fiercely urgent on this score and clearly viewed my eyes as the deadliest vulnerability in my sexuality. Because the Lord had created my eyes, He already knew what I was only just learning—that my eyes were not defective, perverse, or broken. They were simply made to work this way. My eyes would continue to do precisely what they were designed to do until I defended this vulnerability by teaching them to bounce away from all the sensual scenes around me.

The truth regarding this *first* vulnerability in a man's sexuality (the eyes and the mind) provided the basis for my teaching in *Every Man's Battle*, and I'm reviewing it here because that truth is still consistent for all of us guys. You either train your eyes to behave, or you keep falling into sexual sin. Since there is no middle ground, it's vital to ask yourself this question: Which side are *you* standing on?

I knew *exactly* where I stood at the time. I was someone who'd lost too many battles—until I chose to flip sides on Merle Hay Road that day. Mobilizing my entire soul, I built a “defense system” that started with commanding my eyes to quickly glance away from the alluring curves whenever a beautiful female form was in my viewfinder. “Bounce the eyes” became my new mantra.

Let me be honest: I didn't experience immediate and total success in one moment. Quite frankly, my eyes's habits were too strong to control initially. I continued to latch onto sexualized images around me. There were many times during those first two weeks after my Merle Hay Road moment when my eyes would not fall in line and bounce away from getting a good look at the curvy women around me. During that fortnight, I chalked up failure after failure.

I didn't give up, though. I fought fiercely, knowing God was with me every step of the way because He promised He would always be there for me, just like He's always there for you. During the third and fourth weeks, I resisted the urge to look on multiple occasions—I said no! That was real, tangible progress. Hope dawned as I began winning about as often as I failed. Playing .500 ball in this battle may not seem that special to you, but to me at the time, given my past, this was an unbelievably encouraging change of events.

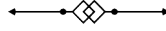
Things greatly improved in weeks five and six. My eyes were consistently bouncing away from the sensual. By the end of six weeks, I can honestly say I'd sustained an incredible victory. My formerly undisciplined eyes were firmly under control.

With that, I was certain my battle for purity was over. Without those sexy images in my brain to light my sexual fuses, my issues with masturbation receded like a low tide. Everything was going exactly the way I expected it to go. After all, I'd clamped off that lusty fuel line running through my eyes and calmed my engines considerably, and my habit was now under control in many important ways.

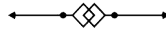
## Where Was Victory?

For instance, I stopped masturbating every Sunday morning because I was no longer lusting over the lingerie models in the newspaper ad inserts. I stopped masturbating in my hotel rooms on the road because I was no longer watching the sensual exercise shows before I checked out.

What a difference in my life!



If you haven't yet fortified your defenses around your eyes, you are fighting a losing battle. Don't ignore this vast visual nature in your sexuality. Any triumph in your battle for purity must start with you securing this vulnerability in your eyes. If you need help doing that, pick up a copy of the revised and updated twentieth-anniversary edition of *Every Man's Battle* for detailed instructions.

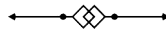


## A Message to Women

I'm glad you are reading *Battle On, Battle Over* for two reasons. First, guys need the women in their lives to understand how men are wired sexually so that they understand why masturbation often plays a significant role in their sexuality. After reading this book, many of you will want to help your husband or boyfriend win their battle for purity. You'll need to be familiar with this content to build useful strategies together, and you'll both find Brenda's chapters later in the book to be very helpful for managing your relationship as a couple.

Second, research shows that porn and masturbation have become huge issues for women. For that reason, I've asked my wife, Brenda, to contribute a strong female perspective on the woman's battle for purity beginning in Chapter 3 of *Battle On, Battle Over*.

Guys, you need to read what she has to say there as well.



I knew that the lust of the eyes drives much of the masturbation in men. But evidently, not all of it. That's what had me stumped.

After all, my eyes were now tightly shielded and secure. And since the Lord had urgently pressed me to set up a defense perimeter around my eyes when I engaged the battle on Merle Hay Road, I naturally assumed that once I got my eyes and mind under control, my battle would be over and I would be free.

But that assumption looked significantly flawed on this particular night months later as I sat berating myself in my office at midnight, broken and

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alone, after having just masturbated once again. While I'd obviously had some clear successes in my battle for sexual purity, my late-night office hours had proven time and again that I hadn't yet slipped the last dagger into the heart of my masturbation habit.

I still didn't own my sexuality. On nights like this, I still couldn't say no, even though my eyes were under control. Granted, masturbation was no longer a regular part of my daily life, but the practice remained far too routine during these late-night stints at my office.

*What's going on here?*

My heart was battered and bewildered. *I thought I'd be free by now! I did exactly what God said I should do.*

I'd built a defense quickly and defended that visual vulnerability with all my heart, like no one else I knew at the time. What was I missing? *Am I just a rotten Christian? Maybe I am a pervert after all!*

Sound familiar? I wouldn't be surprised to hear that you've brutally pounded yourself with your own harsh words, but I want you to understand something very clearly, my friend. His divine power has given you everything you need to win this battle for good. It is your birthright to participate in His divine nature, live above your earthly, natural habits, and escape your sexual sin permanently (see 2 Peter 1:3–4).

You're not losing this battle because you're a rotten pervert. You're either losing because you haven't yet consistently applied the knowledge that you have, or you simply don't yet understand your vulnerabilities and how you need to defend yourself in this battle. That is where I was. I really wasn't a rotten person. In fact, I already had everything I needed inside of me to win this battle, just like you do. I was simply missing a critical piece of the puzzle.

But what was this missing piece?

It certainly wasn't sexual deprivation. I had no sexual hunger in my life. Brenda kept my sexual appetites sated, satisfied, and replete.

Was there a crack in my defenses? It wasn't a lust thing mentally, that's for sure. I relentlessly starved my mind and ruthlessly took every lustful thought captive.

There were no chinks in my eye armor, either. I bounced my eyes away from every bit of sensuality in my life, and the scene of my late-night defeats—my office—was clean of all visual temptation. There was no secret stash of *Playboy* magazines in the back of my file cabinets.

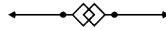
Still, I kept tripping up, and I was frustrated. The following thought began racing through my mind regularly: *If I'm not sexually deprived and if my mind and my eyes aren't triggering this masturbation in my office, what exactly is precipitating this mess anyway?*

As my late-night losses piled higher despite the exhaustive defenses I'd

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constructed around that first vulnerability (my eyes and my mind), I began wondering if there might just be a *second* vulnerability in my sexuality that I didn't know about yet, one that I hadn't yet defended as I had already done with the first. Was there some other common crack in a guy's sexual defenses out there that I wasn't yet aware of? Was there a second sexual fuel line that could gun a guy's engines this way?

I wasn't sure, but it had me by the throat, whatever it was. As I grappled with that question over the following weeks, I took a prolonged look at my life's circumstances to see if I could figure out what that second vulnerability might be.



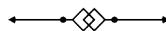
One circumstance jumped out at me. At the time, I was in full-commission sales. No salary. No regular paycheck. For those who've never lived in that world, let me describe it in the frankest of terms: If you don't sell something, your kids don't eat.

That's pressure.

Since my career was young and my customer base was tiny, enormous financial pressure rested heavily across my shoulders. That pressure was the sole reason I worked late so often. I had to be out in the field during the daytime, pitching to prospects and potential buyers. That meant writing up proposals and sales plans at some other time of the day. Since the early evening was reserved for my wife and kids, the late-night slot became my go-to time to fill out the necessary paperwork and devise sales strategies.

I pondered these things, and the Lord revealed a distinct connection between this financial pressure and my masturbation. I realized that I masturbated on the nights when the fear and the financial pressure were at their greatest. On those evenings, I felt like I almost *had* to do it, as if I were practically being forced by gunpoint to lose control.

I looked closely at these themes of churning financial pressure playing across my heart, and it became sickeningly manifest to me that I didn't trust God when it came to my business and my finances. I also noticed that I couldn't trust *myself* either, which was a second critical discovery I made as I studied my life. I simply wasn't sure I had what it took to make it in the world of men.



When it comes to searching out your identity as a man, receiving a real man's blessing and stamp of approval is everything. You need a father or influential man in your life to put an arm around your shoulder and tell you that you

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belong, that you fit in the world of men, that you have what it takes.

But I was the only guy left in the house after Dad slammed the front door on his way out to be with his mistresses. Sure, after the divorce was final, Mom told me endlessly that I was becoming a fine young man during my high school years, and my two sisters said plenty of girls thought I was one handsome hunk of burliness. I heard the whispers of girls in my classes when they called me “foxy” and “cute.”

But, alas, women don't count in this equation. Men become men in the company of men, not in the company of women. You'll *never* find your manhood by chasing girls, and if you're searching for it there, you're wasting your time, spinning away on your gerbil wheel, going nowhere. Only another man can declare that you belong in the brotherhood: *You fit in, boy. Come on up and stand with us, shoulder to shoulder.* And if the man saying this is your father, it's a hundred times better.

The trouble is, my dad never made that declaration to me. As time played out through the years, he never would. Fathers are crucial in bestowing manhood to their sons, but most botch the job miserably, and we sons pay dearly for it.

We try to keep these fears and this self-doubt hidden, of course. I'm sure that I seemed just fine to everyone else out there at the time. But to me, I was still no more than a little boy posing as a man, inadequate to complete the tasks at hand. No matter how steeply I grew the arc of my young sales career, I was terrified that sooner or later, everyone would realize that I was exactly what my dad regularly and publicly told me while I was growing up, which was this: “You're a dumbshit!”<sup>1</sup>

When I added the fact that my father, a National AAU wrestling champion, never forgave me for dropping wrestling to play football, it became clear to me—as I knew it was to him—that I'd never cut it as a man.

Sure, I could *pose* as a man with the best of them, just like you can. But for years, I never really felt like I measured up. Since I'm convinced that many of us men live this way, this too might accurately be called every man's battle—the fight to finally feel that genuine sense of manhood and find a sure and settled place in the world of men.

For reasons I'll delve into later in this book, this lack of affirmation of my manhood was a primary driver of my masturbation, along with intense financial pressure. I simply didn't feel what real men feel. Deep down, I had no calm assurance that I had what it takes to make it in this world of men. I had no specific knowledge that I could come through in the clutch with a paycheck every two weeks. I was alone. An outcast from the world of men. An imposter on a man's stage.

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1. While I don't use profanity like this, I feel it's important to quote my father accurately for context.

## Where Was Victory?

While I'd come through for my teammates plenty of times on the gridiron back in my playing days, this was different, and I knew it. I'd had no success yet on *this* field of play, and there was no one around coaching me up or telling me I had what it takes as a man. The anxiety and self-doubt were often staggering.

*Can anyone count on me? Probably not. Even I can't count on myself!*

Because of earlier experimentation with masturbation as a teen, I instinctively knew that an orgasm was like a pressure valve releasing a calming balm of peace and a desperately needed sense of control and manhood to my soul, if only for a moment. And so, on many nights, my out-of-control insecurity and fear would get so high that every strand of my being screamed for release. I couldn't say no.

Yet once I tied my wispy sense of manhood and my crushing financial pressure to my masturbation habits, my head finally began to clear up on the matter. Remember, I'd started this self-inspection regarding my late-night sexual sin at my office with one driving question: *Was there some other common crack in a guy's sexual defenses out there that I wasn't aware of yet?*

Well, there was, and by now I was fully enlightened. There *is* a second vulnerability in a man's sexuality (and in a woman's sexuality, for that matter). I'd finally connected enough dots in my life for a huge and life-changing revelation to blast through my brain: *My late-night masturbation habit isn't a sexual issue at all! It's a financial trust issue! It's an identity issue, a manhood issue!*

This revolutionized my approach to purity. For the first time, I understood that not all sexual sin is sexual at its root. Unequivocally, this is the most important truth I ever picked up on purity's battlefield. Note it well, my friend.

Now initially, this revelation tied my brain into knots. I'd argue with myself, saying, *But I'm masturbating! It has to be sexual, doesn't it?*

But it wasn't. Sure, I *was* masturbating, and I *was* using my sexual apparatus to deal with the financial pressure and to cope with the father wounds that had shamed me and warped my sense of manhood. But the underlying issues were *not* sexual at all.

Once I'd wrapped my mind around all this, my confusion over my late-night masturbation evaporated. I wasn't a rotten, perverted Christian after all. I was simply an ill-equipped Christian man who hadn't understood the drivers of my late-night masturbation in my office. I didn't know that there was a second "stealth vulnerability" that needed defending, just like my eyes. As soon as I *did* understand this, I devised defenses for this second vulnerability, swinging an axe to the roots and cutting off my sexual sin for good. In other words:

Battle on. Battle over.

After realizing that my masturbation was really a financial trust issue, I stopped taking those pressures and fears into my own hands with a bottle of lotion and a towel. Instead, I took my fears to the Lord in prayer and asked Him to release the financial pressure that I was feeling. Once I understood that this

## Battle On, Battle Over

habit was also a manhood issue from the deep wounds inflicted by my *earthly* father, I moved into a tighter, more intimate relationship with my *heavenly* Father through one-on-one worship. He healed those wounds and assured me that I *did* indeed have what it takes to make it in the world of men as *His* son.

Soon enough, my masturbation habit disappeared. The pressing need for that pressure valve vanished because I started releasing the stress and tension in the proper way with the Lord.

And so, my original suspicions were spot-on. There *was* a second vulnerability in male sexuality, a second front in every man's battle for purity. Even though I established victory on the first front by disciplining my eyes and my mind, the battle raged on until I *also* triumphed on that second front. Gratefully, there are only two fronts in this battle, and I've got them both covered now. That's why today, for all practical purposes, my battle is over.

*Fred, how can you say that so confidently?*

Answer: Because I haven't masturbated in over thirty years.

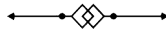
Let me repeat that: I haven't masturbated in more than three decades. Nor have I channel-surfed the TV or gone to the web to look for something racy or raunchy in over thirty years. That's freedom.

I'm not saying I can't fall again into sexual sin. I can. What I'm saying is that I *haven't* fallen again, and I don't intend to in the future. I've got my defenses up, and I'm keeping them up. You could say that I now own my sexuality. You can own yours too.

Perhaps you've read *Every Man's Battle* and built defenses around your eyes, but you're still struggling, still tripping up too regularly. That doesn't make you a pervert or a loser. It simply means that there's a second vulnerability you need to defend, and you didn't know about it. You haven't yet learned that not all sexual sin is sexual at its root, or that you must learn to work through your stress and your wounds with the Lord instead of with your sexuality.

Remember what I said in the introduction to this book. You have a faith as precious as that of Simon Peter, and you have Christ's grace and divine power that should end your battle. If your battle is still raging, then you're lacking one thing—you haven't added knowledge and perseverance to your faith. In short, you simply haven't learned to control your body yet, which you are unquestionably called to do (see 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5).

But you will. Through reading *Battle On, Battle Over*, you will connect your *own* dots, and once you do, your battle can be over for good, just like mine has been for over thirty years. After all, it's your destiny as God's child to be free of sexual sin, and that's the absolute truth.





## Where Was Victory?

Even after sharing my story, I realize that you may still be a bit fuzzy about how stress, fear, and lack of trust can trigger sexual sin. You may be thinking, *How does that even work inside us? It sounds nonsensical and even bizarre to me.*

I understand. That's why I like to call this second vulnerability our "stealth vulnerability." On the surface, there *is* a lack of obvious connection between our stress, our wounds, and our sexuality. That's precisely why very few of us actively defend this vulnerability, but it's there, and it's the very stealthy reason why we often struggle to find complete victory and purity in our lives.

To help you understand this "stealth connection" even more clearly, let me share Logan's story of how porn and masturbation put his marriage in jeopardy.

As you'll see, Logan had been doubting his manhood too.