

STEVE'S STORY: A CASE STUDY
From Keith Martens, M.Div.

I once had a young man, Steve, come to my office to seek help in regard to an uncontrollable problem with voyeurism; something he struggled with since he was a teenager. He came to me quite discouraged because he felt as if he had tried everything. He had also recently married and had hoped that once married he would no longer have trouble with this issue. He believed that sharing a marital relationship with his new bride would meet the sexual needs he was trying to meet through his voyeuristic activity. And I can assure you it wasn't because his wife was unattractive. She was a sweet, virtuous, and beautiful blonde who loved the Lord and shared her husband's passion for Christ and ministry. Both were in leadership at their local church and Steve was the lead worship pastor. He wasn't just a musician who knew a few choruses. He was the real deal—a gifted and anointed worship leader. The kind that makes you realize that all worship leaders are not created equal; not that he was such a talented musician but in regard to being a vessel through which God draws worshippers into the experience of His presence.

Steve was not only extremely honest and forthright, he also was highly accountable to his Senior Pastor and another member of his church staff. His accountability included regular confession and requests for prayer to his wife and members of his church staff. In addition, he would also call one or both of his fellow pastors to pray for him when he was tempted to go out and find an open window to peer through to gratify his desire to see women undress. Steve had also been to see a professional counselor about his problem. He was regularly reading his Bible and diligent in personal and corporate settings for prayer. It certainly looked like he was doing everything right. In fact, just prior to coming to my office he had called his Senior Pastor to ask for prayer because he was alone and was feeling tempted to go out again. He described how he remembered making the call to his pastor and being prayed for. But then he said, "I have no recollection after that of putting my shoes on, walking down the stairs, and going out into the apartment complex to look for an open window. The next thing I remember was standing outside a window to see a woman undress. "After that," he said, "I decided to come see you." Yeah, "no pressure" I thought to myself! But with the beauty and simplicity of all Jesus has taught us to do, I felt none.

After hearing his dilemma I prayed asked Jesus to help him do what he was powerless to do. I asked Him reveal what was at the root of this problem and why all of his efforts yielded little or no real freedom. With Christ's authority I also commanded that if there was anything hidden or at work to keep him from his freedom to come into the light of Christ and His truth, *in Jesus Name*. When I did this he began to appear dizzy and then slowly rolled out of his chair and onto the floor. I went over to assist him as he rolled over onto his back. I prayed for him to have God's peace and understanding about what was happening to him. After a few minutes I helped him back into his chair and asked him what he was experiencing. He responded with a tone of surprise and with a question, "My sister's boyfriend! What does he have to do with this?"

Somewhat confused and thinking aloud he asked, "Why am I thinking about him? He's dead. And besides I hated him anyway." "Okay," I said, "Could we just ask Jesus if that means anything, or if there's anything significant about the fact that you remembered him?" He agreed and we proceeded. After this he reported seeing an image of himself standing outside looking through a window to watch a woman undress. He then added, "But when you commanded whatever was hidden to come into the light, I saw myself separate from my body in the scene and can see myself looking through the window as an observer. As I'm watching I realize that it is not me looking through the window but my sister's boyfriend." "That's interesting," I thought to myself as I again asked him if we could bring that to the Lord to show us if it meant anything. He agreed and as I prayed I asked the Lord to reveal why there were two representations of himself and once more *in Jesus' name*, I commanded everything to come into the clear light of Christ and His truth. This time he reported an actual memory of his childhood. He remembered how his sister's boyfriend would at times ask him to go into the bathroom with him in order to show him pornographic pictures. Then he remembered how the boyfriend would take him outside and hold him up to see through his sister's bedroom window and make him watch her undress.

Steve just sat there a moment to reflect on all this. Not only had he forgotten this, he was remembering it in a very experiential way that he simply couldn't deny. He also said that he had never made the connection between this past experience and his current problem with voyeurism. After some time I asked Steve to *renounce* any influence that came through this young man's influence on his life at such a young age.¹ I also spent some time helping him understand what it means to forgive someone and asked if he would be willing to begin the process of releasing (forgiving) the person who hurt him and the sins that were committed against him to Christ for *His* judgment.¹¹ It

was a good start. Or as we like to describe it, it was an initial step of freedom that would allow him to begin healing. After 20 years we've come to understand and embrace the idea that "Freedom is for bondage and healing is for wounds." Actually, freedom is what opens the door to the cage of bondage and allows a person to heal from the psychological and emotional wounds so they can begin living outside the cage they've built for themselves. And this is why we have both a ministry of training others to lead people to freedom as well as counseling center with licensed professionals to help people heal.

Steve began his journey toward restoration. He needed more freedom *and* healing. But what happened that day in my office broke the power of sin and the bondage he was in and freed him from the *compulsion* to "use" or act out his voyeuristic behavior. In the days following he told me, "For the first time I feel like I have the ability to really choose. It doesn't control me anymore. I am still tempted but now the accountability and prayer is enough to keep from staying stuck in this pattern of behavior." He added, "I know I need more freedom *and* healing but this is a good start. At least I have some hope and a measure of victory now." Praise God!
