



Rapha's Step Studies for Overcoming Sexual Addiction

STEP 1

We admit that by ourselves we are powerless over our compulsive sexual behavior and that our lives have become unmanageable.

*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh;
for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.
Rom. 7:18*

Admitting your powerlessness is the first step toward healing from compulsive sexual behavior. This admission exposes the hopelessness of dealing with your problems by yourself, without the help of others and without the help of God. While you may sincerely cry out to God for help at times, you probably realize that your plea is usually after you have already engaged in your compulsive behavior, not before. In taking this first step, you exercise humility by admitting that you need help.

There are two important parts to this step. The first part is your admission of **powerlessness**, which refers to the repetitive nature of your compulsive sexual behavior in spite of promises to yourself and others that you will change. The second part is admitting your **unmanageability**.

POWERLESSNESS

You probably realize at times that you are powerless. You can recognize this from the many broken promises that you have made to yourself and to God regarding repentance from sexual sin. You know you are powerless when your sexual sin suddenly explodes into reality when you don't expect it. You know you are powerless when you come out of the "trance" that leads up to sexual sin, and suddenly you more fully realize what you have done. Along with this return to reality come feelings of shame, fear of discovery, and self-condemnation.



Read the following questions carefully and answer them honestly.

1. Why is it important for you to believe that, on your own, you are powerless (1 Corinthians 8:2)?

2. How did your sexual addiction become progressively stronger in your life? Give an example.

3. How have you attempted to control your sexual sin by yourself, and why didn't it work?

4. Were there times when you found it difficult to predict the consequences of sexual sin? Give an example.

5. Preoccupation with your compulsive behavior means thinking about it or setting up situations in which you are more likely to engage in your behavior. Consider Romans 8:5 regarding preoccupation. Give an example from your own life.



UNMANAGEABILITY

The second part of Step 1 is your admission of unmanageability. Unmanageability is revealed through the effects of your sexual sin on all aspects of your life. You may wake up the morning after a night of sexual binging with a "guilt hangover," feeling tired and shameful. You may become painfully aware of the money you have wasted on a sexual binge, which might range from ten to several hundred dollars. Though the fear of contracting a treatable sexual disease or a fatal disease such as AIDS may constantly haunt your thoughts, you continue down the road to self-destruction, unable to stop your compulsive behavior. You withdraw from your spouse, family members, and friends as you struggle with your guilt and the fear of discovery. Co-workers may notice that you appear tired and preoccupied, and you may concentrate poorly as memories of your compulsive sexual behavior appear in your mind spontaneously. You may even become somewhat paranoid, supposing that others can tell something is wrong, or that one of them has seen you somewhere you should not have been. Finally, you may avoid church and other Christian activities due to your guilt and feelings of hypocrisy. Or you may attend church, but suffer through the service feeling guilty and fearful. Your unmanageability may or may not be visible to others.

Describe a specific example from your own life in the spaces provided.

1. **Physical deterioration** is revealed as physical or mental exhaustion (bum-out), lowered resistance to infection, weight problems, etc.
2. **Emotional problems** refer to guilt, depression, difficulty in sharing feelings with others, or having your feelings come out in destructive ways.
3. **Family and social problems** may include family fights, poor communication with loved ones, alienation of friends, and withdrawal from social activities.



4. **Work problems** range from being fired for poor work performance to inability to find a job due to a poor work record, working at a job below one's capabilities, withdrawing from community or church work, or not being able to perform duties properly.
5. **Financial problems** may be attributed to money spent on compulsive behavior, compulsive spending to feel better, and poor money management.
6. **Spiritual problems** develop as compulsive behavior progresses. You may feel hypocritical, or you may feel far away from God.

Eventually, like the prodigal son in Luke 15, you realize your foolishness, and yearn to be back in your Father's household. Yet, you may fear God and His response to your sin, and, therefore, you continue to try on your own to be good. This reveals your powerlessness still more, as your efforts to be good fail repeatedly. Finally, you may find a counselor or a group who can help and begin to confide in someone of the true nature of your struggle with sexual addiction. This begins the healing process.

As you consider your struggle to be sexually pure, answer the following questions.

1. Read the first part of the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-16. How was powerlessness and unmanageability demonstrated by the son's actions?
2. What difficulties are you having in recognizing your own powerlessness and unmanageability (1 John 1:8-10)?



3. How can facing up to powerlessness and unmanageability help you to choose the right path to righteousness (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)?

FOR MEDITATION

- Step 1 begins with the risk of personal honesty.
Psalm 51:6 - "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom."
- Step 1 challenges you to see that your situation has become unmanageable.
Romans 7:18 - "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not."
- Step 1 challenges you to see powerlessness, the paradoxical key which unlocks the door to recovery.
2 Corinthians 12:10b - "For when I am weak, I am strong."

PRAYER

When you are in the process of getting rid of bad habits, it is important for you to replace them with good ones. Prayer is a great habit to take up. It doesn't have to be complicated. It is just simple communication between you and God. You talk, and God listens. You listen, and God talks back. It may not seem to happen at first, but don't give up. Most people who have struggled with sexual addiction find their "receivers" are temporarily out of order. Maybe that has happened to you. Sometimes it takes a little while to get the "line" cleared up. Make prayer the first and last thing you do each day and see what a difference it can make.

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