



Rapha's Step Studies for Overcoming Sexual Addiction

STEP 2

**We come to believe that God,
through Jesus Christ, can restore us to sanity.**

*What a wretched man I am!
Who will rescue me from this body of death?
Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!
Romans 7:24–25a*

In the first step, you admitted you could not conquer your compulsive habits without assistance. In the second step, you will begin to have hope that perhaps someone can help you to overcome your addiction and be victorious. This hope may have already started while reading a book about sexual addiction, or through hearing about a group that helps those who struggle with sexual problems. Hope often comes through a sermon, or through a passage in the Bible. Ultimately, your hope stems from God through Jesus Christ, but His power might first be revealed through another person who shows concern.

The second part of this step is the idea of "sanity." The word "insanity" may seem very strong, but when you review some of your behavior in the midst of your addiction, you will probably agree that your actions were not truly "sane." One definition of insanity is: "Doing the same thing over and over again, while expecting different results." In other words, you might turn back to your compulsive sexual behavior time and time again, seeking comfort and expecting the outcome to be fulfilling. But each time you will only gather more guilt and shame!



Sanity means health and wholeness, and it implies that you act rationally and effectively. *Webster's Dictionary* defines sanity as "soundness or health of mind." When we consider the mind, we recognize that the soundness of our mind depends on the beliefs that we hold most deeply. Our actions are usually a result of these deeply held beliefs. *Proverbs 23:7* says, "... for as he thinks within himself, so he is." Our beliefs determine our thoughts, which influence our emotions and our actions. Which beliefs typify the mind of someone struggling with compulsive sexual behavior?

Patrick Carnes, in his book *Out of the Shadows*, suggests that most sexual addicts believe these four lies about themselves:

1. *I am basically a bad, unworthy person.*
2. *No one would love me as I am.*
3. *My needs are never going to be met if I have to depend on others.*
4. *Sex is my most important need.*

The first three beliefs imply fear of punishment, rejection, and abandonment. The person who is convinced of their badness and unworthiness will fear punishment from God and others. An individual who believes he is completely unlovable expects others to reject him, especially if they know of his secret. The one who feels that his needs will never be met by others fears abandonment. Whatever you deeply fear is what you firmly believe in!

The apostle John wrote, "*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).*" Christ has completely and totally paid for your sins. You need not fear punishment because you have been given the righteousness of God in Christ.

The fourth belief, *Sex (or romantic intimacy) is my most important need*, creates an identity conflict for the Christian. You have been given everything you need through Christ in order to live the Christian life on earth. Yet, your actions may suggest that you believe God's provision is not sufficient in terms of your needs. You may be similar to the man mentioned in *James 1:23–24* who looks at his reflection in a mirror, then turns away, and forgets who he is. You have forgotten your true identity in Christ as His servant when you engage in compulsive sexual behavior.

The second step implies true faith in God. At first, you may think you have never lost faith in God, but on closer examination, you realize that believing in God does not mean that you will always accept and trust in His power. In *James 2:18b–19* we are told, "Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder."



In moments of fear or hopelessness, you may doubt the presence of God. When the disciples became frightened as a furious storm threatened to swamp their little boat, they awakened Jesus and pleaded with Him, saying, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Jesus calmed the storm and then He said, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith (Mark 4:35–41)?"

It is possible for a believer to have doubts. Even though you pray, read your Bible, and attend church, you may still not believe God's goodness and strength. This type of unbelief is by degrees. It might mean that you mostly believe in God, but you doubt He can truly heal you in your sexuality problems. Even though you have salvation, you may sometimes struggle with an unbelieving heart.

The second step is called the Hope Step, because you address your doubts, and you focus on the reality of a God who cares deeply about you. He can help you if you are willing.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What are two examples of times you lost true faith in God, as the disciples did during the storm?
 - a.
 - b.
2. What would be a good definition of true faith in God?
3. Read Psalm 42. The author seems to be going through a terrible struggle. What solution does he suggest?



4. Read Matthew 14:22–33. When Peter began to fear the wind rather than to trust the Lord, he began to sink. Which people and situations make you afraid and take your attention away from God?
5. Read Mark 9:17–24 for an example of the unbelieving heart in the believer. Give two examples from your own life about your struggles with your "unbelieving heart."
 - a.
 - b.
6. If you are truly honest, do you find these beliefs within yourself? Why, or why not? Give examples for each belief.
 - a. *I am basically a bad, unworthy person.*
 - b. *No one would love me as I am.*
 - c. *My needs are never going to be met if I have to depend on others.*
 - d. *Sex or romantic intimacy is my most important need.*



7. Give three examples of times you demonstrated "insanity," or lack of sound judgment, in your sexual addiction.

a.

b.

c.

8. In what ways do you see God restoring you to sanity? Give three examples.

a.

b.

c.

9. What do the following scripture passages say about faith and hope? John 6:28–35

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