



*As a young woman,
I never thought
pornography would
be something
I could struggle with.*

I never thought a pornography addiction could be a girl's problem. I was proved wrong when I was about 16 years old. I came across a video of pornography, and since I was alone and curious, I watched it. After that first time, I felt like I had to watch something every day. I became addicted to pornography.

Viewing pornography made me feel bad. I knew it was wrong, but I didn't

NO LONGER **ADDICTED:** My Journey to Overcome Pornography

Name withheld

do anything to change. I was never happy, and I felt dirty and infected with Satan's tempting filth. But I still found ways to watch it just so I could satisfy my appetite. My addiction led to more and more wrongdoings. I lied to everyone: my brother, my mother, and worst of all, the Lord and myself. I would tell myself that one more movie wasn't going to hurt me, one more dirty story wouldn't be that bad.

I still went to church, Mutual, and seminary, but I didn't have the right attitude or the Spirit with me. I was resentful, so I didn't get anything from the lessons. I stopped paying my tithing, praying, and reading the scriptures. I felt guilty, but I still couldn't bring myself to quit. I was bringing myself down every day.

Eventually, my access to pornography was restricted. At first I felt deprived without pornography, but then I realized things had changed for the better. My routine was different. I didn't watch pornography every day. I still had urges to watch it, but I became better about resisting them. Eventually, after two years of being addicted to pornography, I began praying consistently for strength and stopped watching it completely. But I still felt dirty inside. I knew I needed to talk to the bishop. I just couldn't bring myself to do it.

Finally, after hearing a lot of people talk about going through the repentance process and the trials they overcame, I felt that I really needed to

see my bishop. I also realized I was missing out on a great blessing in the Church: my patriarchal blessing.

I made an appointment to meet with my bishop.

I felt ashamed walking into my bishop's office the night of my interview. I was afraid he was just going to look at me and tell me that my case was hopeless and that I had dug myself a hole that was too deep to escape. I was afraid he would never look at me the same. But as I told him my whole story, he gave me a loving smile and listened intently. He really cared about me. After talking with my bishop and working through things, he finally told me I was clean.

My years addicted to pornography were the roughest of my life, but I felt so good leaving my bishop's office and feeling clean. It was as if a weight I had been carrying for years was lifted off my shoulders. I was glad I could receive my patriarchal blessing and worthily partake of the sacrament and have the Spirit again. I felt like a new person. People even told me how different I seemed and that I had a different glow about me. I was happier all the time and had a better attitude about everything.

I know that with the Lord's help we can change and overcome addictions. And we don't need to worry about talking with the bishop, because he will help us as we repent so we can feel clean once again through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. ■



WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

"Through the Atonement, you can receive forgiveness and be cleansed from your sins when you repent.

"Repentance is more than simply acknowledging wrongdoings. . . . It includes turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. . . .

". . . If you have sinned, the sooner you repent, the sooner you begin to make your way back and find the peace and joy that come with forgiveness. . . .

". . . As you strive to repent, seek help and counsel from your parents. Serious sins, such as sexual transgression or use of pornography, need to be confessed to your bishop. Be completely honest with him. He will help you repent."

For the Strength of Youth (booklet, 2011), 28, 29.