What to Do When Pornography is the Third Wheel in Your Relationship

***EDITOR'S NOTE:***[***He Said-She Said***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/) *is a biweekly advice column for singles featuring a question from a Crosswalk.com reader with responses from a male and female point of view. If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously).*

**QUESTION:** My ex-boyfriend and I were going out for six months. During our relationship he confided to me that he had struggled with an addiction to pornography for several years. When we were going out God had already brought him out of the addiction, but I found it very difficult to deal with as both of us regarded it as infidelity. Even though time has passed since the break-up I struggle with the impact of it, and simultaneously with feelings of jealousy when I think of him. I want more than anything to be free and to love him as myself and as my neighbor but I cannot! How can we both move on and be friends?

**HE SAID:**

According to Merriam-Webster, infidelity is “unfaithfulness to a moral obligation” or “the act or fact of having a romantic or sexual relationship with someone other than one’s husband, wife or partner.”

There doesn’t seem to be any disagreement on the definition of infidelity; however, the extent to which it affects a relationship, past, present or future cannot be easily measured nor determined.

Your ex-boyfriend was transparent in his “former” addiction, but you say you found it very difficult to deal with.  There may be a number of reasons for your struggle. One being the accessibility he will always have to pornography, along with the continual lure towards those visual temptations in every media source we encounter.  Another could be a lack of trust or un-forgiveness on your part.

The former is something he will always have to deal with throughout his life, similar to that of an alcoholic with the temptation of drinking. The latter is something you will need to examine and reconcile for your own well-being and your forthcoming relationships.

A past sin often hangs over the culprit and can affect relationships even with those who just have knowledge of it despite not being directly affected, as in your case. You didn’t mention your ex-boyfriend did anything to merit your distrust or slipped back into his indiscretion while you were dating, so your jealousy may have something to do with your prior relationships.

We all carry some part of our past struggles, disappointments and hurts into every subsequent relationship through scars, ill feelings and memories. How we deal (or dealt) with, process and move through our prior pains greatly affects and often determines how successful our subsequent relationships are and can become.

If there is something in your past, something from a previous relationship, something which has burdened you over the years with harsh feelings, it is time for you to get some professional help so you can experience all that God has and wants for you.

**SHE SAID:**

What I am hearing is a lot of mixed, unresolved issues in your question. If he shared of his struggle and that God had set him free, how is that different than any of your sins that God has set you free from? I think what is more important here is the fear that any man you meet will have this same struggle. A struggle that you know, is difficult to get free from. A struggle that you are fearful of coming into your future [**marriage**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/). And that is a legitimate fear.

You didn't mention why you broke up, so I am not sure if your anger is due to that or misplaced by being angry at all men who have had porn additions. As you may know, sex outside of marriage is at an all-time high. From my years of teaching and counseling single adults, I have heard many reasons why people cheat. Sometimes it's lust, addiction, drugs, or just needing affirmation, which is still sin. And for others, there is a deep, deep struggle starting from childhood. A struggle that often starts with abuse and no relationship with God. Then you add parents who are not sure how to talk about sex. And of course today, there is a constant push of the media from selling candy bars to dish detergent in a sexual way. This makes the struggle that much harder. But there is freedom. Christ died to give us that freedom.

So my advice to you is: 1) Start praying for God to reveal the truth in your anger. Are you really mad at your ex boyfriend or all men? Maybe you're angry at yourself. 2) Get some Christian counseling to help sort out your feelings, your hurt and pain. Some of this might be coming from your own childhood, broken dreams, broken promises. 3) Give it to God and leave it with him. You can't control anyone in this world. 4) Ask God to help you trust again. And bind the enemy who appears to continue to attack you in this area.

Please know, not every man is addicted to porn. And no one is above God's healing and restoration. I will be praying for you.

[**Proverbs 3:5-6**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=pr+3:5-6) NIV "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*"

***HE is …******Cliff Young****, a Crosswalk.com contributing writer and a veteran single of many decades. He has traveled the world in search of fresh experiences, serving opportunities, and the perfect woman (for him) and has found that his investments in God, career and youth ministry have paid off in priceless dividends.*

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***DISCLAIMER****: We are not trained psychologists or licensed professionals. We're just average folk who understand what it's like to live the solo life in the twenty-first century. We believe that the* [***Bible***](http://www.biblestudytools.com/) *is our go-to guide for answers to all of life's questions, and it's where we'll go for guidance when responding to your questions. Also, it's important to note that we write our answers separately.*

***GOT A QUESTION?*** *If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com (selected questions will be posted anonymously). While we are unable to answer every inquiry, we do hope that this column will be an encouragement to you. Click here to visit the He Said-She Said* [***archives***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/)*.*