

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What did you find challenging/frustrating as you worked your way through this book? Did you resolve this issue? If so, how? If not, what steps will you take to resolve it?
2. What are a few ways you've developed or grown because of what you've learned?
3. What have you learned about God throughout these eight weeks?
4. What are a few practical tools you gained from this book that you can take with you into daily life?
5. Spend some time in prayer, thanking God for all He has done through this book and everything He will do. Remember this verse: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deut. 31:6). Even when God feels far away, He has never left your side.

You might be wondering, now what? What's next? We want to provide some practical next steps for you to help process through everything you've learned.

NEXT STEPS

As you begin to think through what is next in your freedom journey, here are a few ideas for next steps:

Find community. Are you a part of a church? If not, look for a church and find a community group or Bible study to plug into! We cannot continue our freedom journey alone.

Find accountability. Remember early on when we talked about the value of having accountability friendships? If you haven't found one yet, pray about asking someone in your small group or someone at church to check in with you regularly to ask about your struggle.

Learn more about God's design for sexuality. Maybe you finished this book and you want to better understand what the Bible does say about sexuality. We highly encourage you to read the book *Rethinking Sexuality*.³

Find a counselor. Some of this book could have triggered you or brought up past things that you need to work through. That is okay! We encourage you to seek out counseling to begin processing through these painful memories.

Explore authenticintimacy.com. On our website, we have blogs, podcast episodes, online book studies, and other resources to help meet your needs! There is a resource for every topic of sexuality you could think of.

Most importantly, continue falling in love with Jesus. Remember the quote from Week 4: "Freedom is not the absence of something, it is the presence of someone." We encourage you to run toward Jesus, even in moments of temptation and sin and realize that His presence and grace in our lives is enough. Jesus is right there with you walking through the pain and suffering that you might be experiencing.

We are in this journey together! If you have a question about anything in this book, please send us an email at info@authenticintimacy.com. We would love to connect with you.

Notes

Week 1: The Problem of Porn

1. In 2022, the number of female visitors on one of the largest porn sites (purposefully unlisted here) was about 36 percent worldwide. This is a 4 percent proportional growth increase from 2021. More women are watching porn each year.
2. Joy Skarka, *Sexual Shame in Women and How to Experience Freedom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2022), 69.
3. Skarka, *Sexual Shame*, 62.
4. Adapted from “Porn Is Not Your Biggest Problem,” by Joy Skarka, Covenant Eyes, January 23, 2023, <https://www.covenanteyes.com/2021/11/29/porn-is-not-your-biggest-problem/>. Used with permission.
5. Laura DeCesaris, “How Different Exercises Affect Women’s Hormones,” Rupa Health, January 31, 2023, <https://www.rupahealth.com/post/exercise-affects-on-womens-hormones>.
6. Jay Stringer, *Unwanted: How Sexual Brokenness Reveals Our Way to Healing* (Carol Stream, IL: NavPress, 2018), 232.
7. Michael B. Robb and Supreet Mann, *Teens and Pornography* (San Francisco: Common Sense, 2023), 5, <https://www.common sensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2022-teens-and-pornography-final-web.pdf>.
8. Robb and Mann, *Teens and Pornography*, 6.
9. We highly recommend the book *Hooked: The Brain Science on How Casual Sex Affects Human Development* or the website www.fightthenewdrug.com if you would like to learn more on the subject.
10. One fMRI neuroimaging research study has discovered a decrease in responsiveness to dopamine from becoming tolerant to graphic images because of porn addiction. Valerie Voon et al., “Neural Correlates of Sexual Cue Reactivity in Individuals with and without Compulsive Sexual Behaviours,” *PLOS ONE* 9, no. 7 (July 2014): e102419, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102419>.

11. Joe S. McIlhaney Jr. and Freda McKissic Bush, *Hooked: The Brain Science on How Casual Sex Affects Human Development* (Chicago: Moody, 2019), 144.
12. Eran Shor and Kimberly Seida, ‘Harder and Harder’? Is Mainstream Pornography Becoming Increasingly Violent and Do Viewers Prefer Violent Content?,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 56, no. 1 (April 2018): 16–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2018.1451476>.
13. One study found significant association between reported pornography hours per week and gray matter volume in the brain for those who compulsively use pornography. (Gray matter is associated with healthy functioning in the brain and is responsible for processing new information, emotions, and movement.) Simone Kühn and Jürgen Gallinat, “Brain Structure and Functional Connectivity Associated with Pornography Consumption: The Brain on Porn,” *JAMA Psychiatry* 71, no. 7 (2014): 827–834, <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2014.93>.
14. Marnie C. Ferree, *No Stones: Women Redeemed from Sexual Addiction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010), 72.
15. In the ancient world, relationships between men and women were very different than they are today. People died at younger ages and more frequently, so women were often left widowed and then remarried. Women were not able to initiate a divorce, so the men would have had to choose to leave their wives or would have had to die. This woman probably had experienced several unfortunate events to have had five husbands. See Lynn Cohick, “The Woman at the Well: Was the Samaritan Woman Really an Adulteress?,” in *Vindicating the Vixens: Revisiting Sexualized, Vilified, and Marginalized Women of the Bible*, ed. Sandra Glahn (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017), 250-251.
16. *Ibid.*, 250.
17. Adapted from Joy Skarka’s *Freedom from Porn for Women: 6-Day Devotional and Bible Reading Plan* (Dallas: Aspire Productions, 2021), Kindle.

Week 3: A New Vision for Sexual Wholeness

1. “My Freedom: Growth Track,” Bayside Community Church, 2022, Bradenton, Florida, 5.

2. Interview with Doug Rosenau, *Java with Juli*, podcast audio, November 15, 2021, <https://www.authenticintimacy.com/388-single-sexually-whole/>.

Week 4: Pursuing Sexual Integrity

1. Adapted from “Porn Was My Sex Education,” by Joy Skarka, Covenant Eyes, November 4, 2020, <https://www.covenanteyes.com/2020/11/04/porn-was-my-sex-education-joy-skarkas-story/>.
2. Marnie C. Ferree, *No Stones: Women Redeemed from Sexual Shame* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010), 202.
3. Ferree, *No Stones*, 202–203.
4. Joy Skarka, *Sexual Shame in Women and How to Experience Freedom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2022), 132.
5. Rachel Gurevich, “Trying to Conceive: Increased Sex Drive During Ovulation,” Verywell Family, September 17, 2020, <https://www.verywellfamily.com/in-the-mood-you-may-be-ovulating-1960259>.
6. George N. Collins and Andrew Adleman, *Breaking the Cycle: Free Yourself from Sex Addiction, Porn Obsession, and Shame* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2011), 168.

Week 5: Ditching Lies and Embracing Truth

1. Parts of this story also appeared in Joy Skarka’s book *Sexual Shame in Women and How to Experience Freedom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2022), 64, 127–129.
2. Here are some stats: 4.5 million people are trapped or forced into sexual exploitation globally. Sex trafficking generates \$99 billion annually. (“Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour,” *International Labour Organization* (May 20): 7 and 16.) Forty-nine percent of sexually exploited women said that porn scenes were filmed while they were being sold for sex. (Melissa Farley, “Renting an Organ for Ten Minutes: What Tricks Tell Us About Prostitution, Pornography, and Trafficking,” *Pornography: Driving the Demand for International Sex Trafficking* (2007): 2, <https://www.prostitutionresearch.com/FarleyRentinganOrgan11-06.pdf>.) These may just be numbers, but real people are behind the numbers. Real people just like you and me.

3. Ana Bridges et al., “Aggression and Sexual Behavior in Bestselling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update,” *Violence Against Women* 10 (October 16, 2010): 1065–1085, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801210382866>.

Week 7: Getting Unstuck from Shame

1. Patrick Carnes, *Don't Call It Love: Recovery from Sexual Addiction* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 306.
2. Karen A. McClintock, *Shame-Less Lives, Grace-Full Congregations* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2012), 14.
3. Curt Thompson, *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe About Ourselves* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 13.
4. Brené Brown, “Listening to Shame,” March 2012 at a TED Conference, video, https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame.
5. Thompson, *The Soul of Shame*, 24.
6. Joy Skarka, *Sexual Shame in Women and How to Experience Freedom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2022), 86, 149–151.
7. Ibid.
8. “Fast Facts: Preventing Sexual Violence,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 22, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/fastfact.html>.
9. World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/ethics/sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-pamphlet-en.pdf?sfvrsn=409b4d89_2.

Week 8: When Your Story Becomes a Weapon

1. Jay Stringer, *Unwanted: How Sexual Brokenness Reveals Our Way to Healing* (Carol Stream, IL: NavPress, 2018), 207.
2. Joy Skarka, *Sexual Shame in Women and How to Experience Freedom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2022), 94 and 170.
3. Juli Slattery, *Rethinking Sexuality: God's Design and Why It Matters* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2018).