

Her Freedom Journey

A GUIDE OUT OF
PORN & SHAME TO
AUTHENTIC INTIMACY

dr. Juli Slattery
& dr. Joy Skarka

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

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A Note from Juli and Joy

Hi friend,

You might feel as though you are forging new ground by joining this study. Remember, when God sent His people into new territory and challenges, He told them, “Be strong and courageous, for I am with you.” Those words still apply to us today.

Others have found victory through this study. You’re not alone. Read their encouraging testimonies:

- “He used this book to break the chains I've held for 7.5 years. I'm free now. My prayers have been answered.”
- “This book gave me hope to believe that freedom from pornography is possible and it helped me to forgive, confess, and grieve my past.”

Remember that sexuality represents a spiritual battlefield. Spend time praying for wisdom and discernment. Authentic Intimacy has a number of follow up resources, and can refer you to other ministries and resources to help you sort through questions and issues from a biblical perspective. All suggested Java with Juli podcast episodes mentioned in this resource can be found on AuthenticIntimacy.com.



All for Him,

Juli & Joy

Meetings Syllabus & Schedule

Add Date for Group	Session	Chapters to Read
	1	Meet the Authors—An Introduction to This Book
	2	Week 1: The Problem of Porn
	3	Week 2: Can God’s Love Really Be Enough?
	4	Week 3: A New Vision for Sexual Wholeness
	5	Week 4: Pursuing Sexual Integrity
	6	Week 5: Ditching Lies and Embracing Truth
	7	Week 6: Stop Trying So Hard!
	8	Week 7: Getting Unstuck from Shame
	9	Week 8: When Your Story Becomes a Weapon and A Final Note from Joy and Juli

Important notes:

- *Participants should read the chapters before that week's group discussion.*

WEEKLY SESSIONS



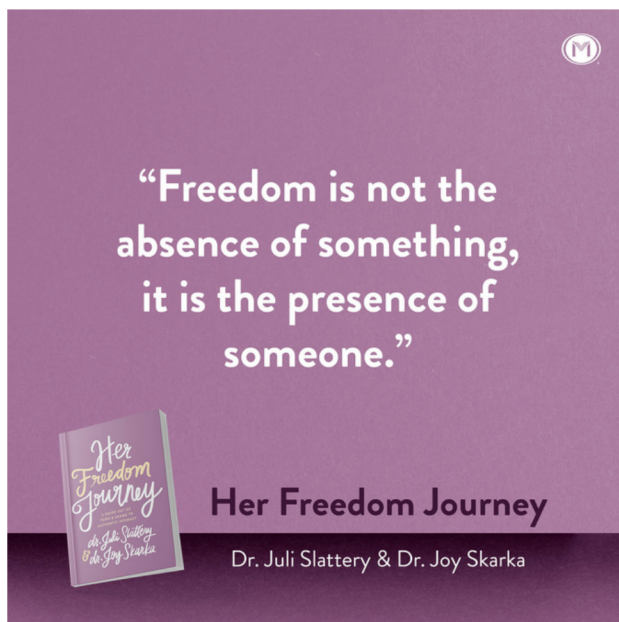
SESSION ONE

Introduction



CHECKPOINT ► MEET THE AUTHORS—AN INTRODUCTION

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Group Member Introductions**
- **Group Covenant**
- **Introduction to the Group Material and the Weekly Meeting Structure**
 - There are 4-days of content for each week. Don't wait until the day before group to read. You can use this book during your daily time with God.





Discussion Questions

- What do you hope to get out of this group?
 - We found that few people were talking about women struggling with unwanted sexual behaviors. Have you heard this topic addressed before? If so, what were the messages?
 - Do you have any hesitations or fears about being in this group?
 - What if anything has been a part of your freedom journey so far? How did that impact your journey?
-
- **Introduction to the Material & Homework**
-
- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**

This Week's Homework:

Week 1: The Problem of Porn

Recommended Resources:

You can find additional resources related to freedom from sexual sin by scanning the QR code below or visiting:
<https://www.authenticintimacy.com/freedom-from-sexual-sin/>



Discuss Week 1



CHECKPOINT ► WEEK 1: THE PROBLEM OF PORN

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Icebreaker:** What is a good thing happening in your life right now, something you are grateful for?



Discussion Questions

1. Joy shared that she can tell her story because “someone else went first.” Talk about your experience of feeling alone in your sexual struggles.
2. How does it feel to know that you are not alone in your struggle with sexual sin?
3. How is pornography, or other sexual sin, affecting your relationship with God right now? How is pornography affecting your relationships with others: friends, family, coworkers, significant others, etc.?
4. How does pornography, or other sexual sin, help you deal with the hard things in your current life or in your past?
5. In Day 2, we looked at reasons why porn isn’t your biggest problem. Which of the following reasons did you most relate to? You need relationships. You need comfort. You need to be “spent.” You need healing.
6. What do you think about your sexual sin issues being intimacy issues? Do you feel like you’re lacking intimacy with God and others?



Discussion Questions

7. What do you think are some of the deeper heart issues of women who struggle with pornography, erotica, or sexual sin?
8. What are some of your hopes and fears as you begin the freedom journey within this group?

Bonus Activity: Write down the answers to Question 8 above and then share together.

- **Introduction to the Material & Homework:** Week 2: Can God's Love Really Be Enough?
- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**

This Week's Homework:

Week 2: Can God's Love Really Be Enough?

Recommended Resources:

Do you struggle with erotica? Read this blog, "Confessions of a Former Erotica Author," by scanning the QR code below or visiting:

<https://www.authenticintimacy.com/confessions-of-a-former-erotica-author/>



SESSION THREE

Discuss Week 2



CHECKPOINT ► WEEK 2: CAN GOD'S LOVE REALLY BE ENOUGH?

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Icebreaker:** What is your favorite thing to do for fun with friends?



Chapter 2 Discussion Questions

1. What was your relationship like with your dad? In what ways did he represent God's love well for you? In what ways did he represent God's love poorly for you?
2. Why do you think people doubt that God's love can really be enough when struggling with sexual sin and shame?
3. Do you believe God's love is enough to set you free from sexual sin and shame? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe you can have an actual friendship with God? Why or why not?
5. Share examples of friendships in your life that are good reflections of God as a friend.
6. After reading the story about Leah, could you relate with her? Share a time when you felt rejected or overlooked.

7. Share about a time when you felt too dirty to approach God. What would change in your life if you truly believed all you needed to do was run into His arms right now (as opposed to clean up first and then run to Him)?
8. On Day 4 you read about practical ways to nurture your relationship with God. Which one can you intentionally pursue this week?

- **Introduction to the Material & Homework:** Week 3: A New Vision for Sexual Wholeness
- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**

This Week's Homework:

Week 3: A New Vision for Sexual Wholeness

Recommended Resources:

Read this blog, “Three Things To Remember About Sexual Sin & Grace” by scanning the QR code below or visiting: <https://www.authenticintimacy.com/three-things-to-remember-about-sexual-sin-grace/>



SESSION FOUR

Discuss Week 3



CHECKPOINT ► WEEK 3: A NEW VISION FOR SEXUAL WHOLENESS

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Icebreaker:** What is a unique skill that you have?



Discussion Questions

1. What why questions do you have about God and sex? How have your why questions been ignored rather than explored or encouraged?
2. Do you believe God cares about your sexuality? Why or why not?
3. How are you allowing your past sexual sin or current struggle to continue to define you?
4. How would you describe the difference between seeking sexual purity and sexual integrity?
5. Why is it so important to understand that purity comes from God and not our own works?
6. Do you believe it is possible to be sexually whole as a single Christian? Why or why not?



Discussion Questions

7. Have you ever felt like you were more sexually broken than someone else? If so, how has believing this lie influenced your friendships and relationships?
8. Share your colored-in heart images with your group. How much of your heart is wholly surrendered to the Lord? Which parts are surrendered? Which parts are you holding back from Him?

- **Introduction to the Material & Homework:** Week 4: Pursuing Sexual Integrity
- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**

This Week's Homework:

Week 4: Pursuing Sexual Integrity

Recommended Resources:

Read this blog, ““God Doesn’t Care” and 3 Other Lies You Might Believe About Sex” by scanning the QR code below or visiting: <https://www.authenticintimacy.com/god-doesnt-care-and-3-other-lies-you-might-believe-about-sex/>



Discuss Week 4



CHECKPOINT ► WEEK 4: PURSUING SEXUAL INTEGRITY

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Icebreaker:** Best/Worst: Have each person share their best and worst moments from the previous week.



Discussion Questions

1. How do you hope sharing with a group can help you come out of hiding?
2. What are some ways sexual sin can affect our real-life relationships with others and with God?
3. On a scale of 0–100 percent, how much do you believe that God cares about your struggles, cries, and pains? How would your sexual struggles look different if you truly believed that God cared 100 percent about your pain and suffering?
4. Share about a time when you chose to hide in God instead of running away from Him. If you've never hidden in God, what would look different if you took this step?
5. What does it look like practically for you to have an accountability partner?
6. Which of the HALT items in the past have made you feel more vulnerable to sexual temptation?

7. Share the items in your Toolbox with the other group members. Brainstorm ideas together. How realistic is it for you to turn to your Toolbox in moments of temptation and do one of the listed activities?
8. Read Philippians 4:8 out loud. What are things you can think about in moments of temptation that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy?

- **Introduction to the Material & Homework:** Week 5: Ditching Lies and Embracing Truth (Heads up, t this next week may be challenging. We encourage you to reach out to a friend in or out of the group often for prayer.)
- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**

This Week's Homework:

Week 5: Ditching Lies and Embracing Truth

Recommended Resources:

Read this blog, “Why You Still Need Boundaries As You Pursue Sexual Integrity” by scanning the QR code below or visiting: <https://www.authenticintimacy.com/why-you-still-need-boundaries-as-you-pursue-sexual-integrity/>



Discuss Week 5



CHECKPOINT ► WEEK 5: DITCHING LIES AND EMBRACING TRUTH

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Icebreaker:** This is usually a more challenging week. We recommend starting with a worship song.



Discussion Questions

1. In the moments before watching porn or reading erotica, what are the thoughts and lies that play in your mind? For example:
 - What's the big deal? At least I'm not sleeping around.
 - I'm so good in every other area of life. This is just my one issue.
 - No one is going to know.
 - I deserve this. I've had a really tough week.
 - I'm unmarried. I'll stop when I get engaged.
2. How does acknowledging that these thoughts are lies help with your struggles?
3. Share the lies you believe and the Scripture you found to counter the lies on your chart from Day 4. If you were unable to find Scripture passages, brainstorm verse ideas together.
4. Believing lies are often the root issue to our problems. Believing one lie can create a chain reaction or snowball effect. How are the lies you just shared impacting your sexual strongholds?



Discussion Questions

5. What are practical ways to address lies when they enter your brain? (Turn back to your Toolbox for ideas.)
6. Satan wants us to think our plans are better than God's plans. He wants us to act like God. What ways in your life do you claim to be like God? Or in what ways do you feel the need to have control over an area of your life?
7. How does doubting God's goodness increase your desire to look at porn or act out sexually?

- **Introduction to the Material & Homework:** Week 6: Stop Trying So Hard!
- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**

This Week's Homework:

Week 6: Stop Trying So Hard!

Recommended Resources:

Read this blog, "A Road Map to Sexual Integrity in the Midst of Sexual Brokenness" by scanning the QR code below or visiting: <https://www.authenticintimacy.com/a-road-map-to-sexual-integrity-in-the-midst-of-sexual-brokenness/>



Discuss Week 6



CHECKPOINT ► WEEK 6: STOP TRYING SO HARD!

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Icebreaker:** Start with discussion question #1 below.



Discussion Questions

1. Right now in your recovery journey, do you feel burdened or hopeful? If burdened and weighed down, how can Christ give you hope?
2. If in the past you've tried to earn freedom on your own by doing more and trying harder yet you didn't find freedom, what do you think happened? Why didn't it work?
3. In Day 2 you practiced confession in three parts: confessing to the Lord your sin, asking for God's grace and mercy, and resolving to trust in God's strength and grace and not in your own promise to avoid sin. In your small group, share how that process went for you.
4. Share an example of how you have tried to negotiate with God or justify your behaviors instead of surrendering to Him.
5. How does knowing God change the way you view sexuality, your past sexual sin, and what it means to be "free"?



Discussion Questions

6. How does knowing that the Holy Spirit connects us to God in the most intimate way possible impact your relationship with God?
7. Do you believe that God's grace can run out for you? If so, how would your life look different if you truly believed that God's grace never runs out?
8. What is God asking you to surrender to Him that seems difficult to obey right now? What would surrender look like?

- **Introduction to the Material & Homework:** Week 7: Getting Unstuck from Shame (This next week may be challenging as you read Joy's story of sexual assault. We encourage you to reach out for help to a counselor and to pray for one another.)
- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**

This Week's Homework:

Week 7: Getting Unstuck from Shame

Recommended Resources:

Read this blog, "If I'm Free, Why Can't I Do What I Want? And Other Ways We Misunderstand Freedom" by scanning the QR code below or visiting:
<https://www.authenticintimacy.com/if-im-free-why-cant-i-do-what-i-want-and-other-ways-we-misunderstand-freedom/>



SESSION EIGHT

Discuss Week 7



CHECKPOINT ► WEEK 7: GETTING UNSTUCK FROM SHAME

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Icebreaker:** Share a highlight from your week.



Chapter 8 Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, explain the difference between guilt and shame. How does knowing the difference between guilt and shame impact your freedom journey?
2. In what ways have you felt sexual shame for who you are, what you've done, or what's been done to you?
3. What would change in your freedom journey if you fully believed that you don't have to run and hide from God, and that God loves you for who you are?
4. What "fig leaves" are you hiding behind, attempting to cover your shame? How does hiding make you feel?
5. Has shame ever kept you away from Christian community? If so, how could your life be different if you pursued relationships even amid shame?
6. How have events that happened to you caused you to believe lies about your worth and value?

7. In what ways have those lies and shame made your struggle with pornography more difficult?

8. Thinking back to the story of the woman in Luke, what does it mean for you personally to be transformed from an identity of sinner to the identity of the one who loves, just like she was forgiven and transformed?

- **Introduction to the Material & Homework:** Week 8: When Your Story Becomes a Weapon and A Final Note from Joy and Juli
- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**

This Week's Homework:

Week 8: When Your Story Becomes a Weapon and A Final Note from Joy and Juli

Recommended Resources:

Read this blog, "Why Is Healing So Hard?" by scanning the QR code below or visiting: <https://www.authenticintimacy.com/why-is-healing-so-hard/>



SESSION NINE

Discuss Week 8



CHECKPOINT ► WEEK 8: WHEN YOUR STORY BECOMES A WEAPON

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
- **Icebreaker:** How have you seen yourself grow spiritually during the study?



Discussion Questions

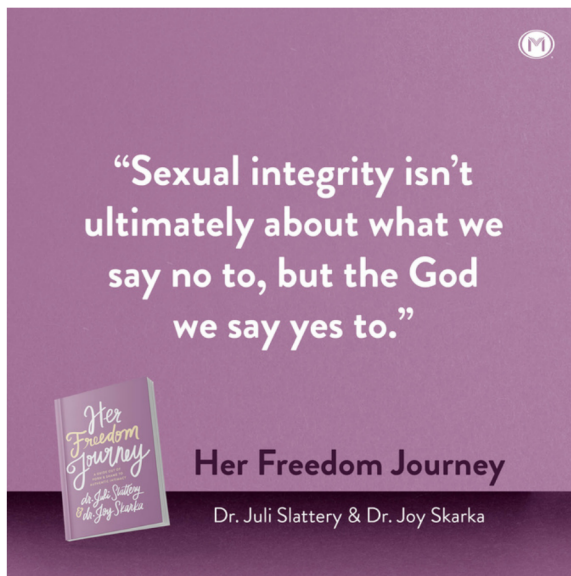
1. Take a few minutes to talk about how sharing parts of each other's stories during the group has encouraged you.
2. Share about a time when you've told someone a secret part of your story. What was their reaction and what was yours? Were you met with love or judgment?
3. On Day 3, you started writing out your story. How was that experience?
4. What are some "pieces" of your story that have started to fit together as you've begun to process your story?
5. How would you describe your view of sexual sin and struggles when you first started this book? How did your view change?
6. Share about an "Aha!" moment during group time or while reading the book that powerfully impacted you.
7. What are a few practical tools you gained from this book that you can take with you into daily life?



Discussion Questions

8. What is one next step in your freedom journey? Share your next step with your group.

- **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer**



Recommended Resources:

Read this blog, “Overcoming Addiction: The Crucial Element You Might Be Missing” by scanning the QR code below or visiting: <https://www.authenticintimacy.com/overcoming-addiction-the-crucial-element-you-might-be-missing/>



APPENDICES



Appendix A: Sample Group Covenant

Small Group Covenant:

Our group will be studying *Her Freedom Journey*.

To get the most out of this study and ensure the best experience possible, we agree together to live by the following standards throughout our time together doing this study:

- We agree to be on time in order to respect others.
- We agree to keep things said in group confidential.
- We agree to attend group as faithfully as possible making it a priority.
- We agree to participate in group, while being careful not to dominate.
- We agree to treat one another with respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement or conflict.
- We agree to pray and support one another throughout our time meeting together.
- We agree to give our full attention to the group and study (as much as we are able) during the meeting time, and limit distractions in our surroundings.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” -Hebrews 10:24-25

I am in agreement with this Group Covenant:



Appendix B: Bonus Content and Resources

Some of our Java with Juli episodes will be locked as member-only resources and others will be open to the public. You can become an Authentic Intimacy member [here](#) to have access to all of the content below.

Java with Juli Episodes:

- [#117 How Your Sex Life Is Connected to Your Spiritual Life](#)
- [#139 “Why Your Story Matters”](#)
- [#146 “All You Need is Jesus... and Your Therapist”](#)
- [#160: “Why God Created You to be Sexual”](#)
- [#166 “We Are All Sexually Broken”](#)
- [#192 “Engaging in Restorative Relationships”](#)
- [#203 “Navigating Different Views on Sexuality”](#)
- [#211 Understanding Pornography Addiction](#)
- [#236 “Pursue Wholeness, Not Purity”](#)
- [#273 “Tell Someone You’re Broken”](#)
- [#297 “Finding Freedom in the Midst of Brokenness”](#)
- [#369: Changing the Way We Talk About Porn \(Because Women Struggle Too\)](#)

Authentic Intimacy Blogs:

- [“The ‘Why’ for Every Sexual Question”](#)
- [“Why your Story Matters”](#)
- [“You Can be Single and Sexual”](#)
- [“What Do You Do When the Person You’re Dating Struggles With Porn?”](#)
- [“7 Reasons Kids Turn To Porn & What You Can Do About It”](#)
- [“Purity Culture: Lose the Lies, Keep Your Faith”](#)
- [“Why Promise Rings and Purity Talks Fall Short”](#)
- [“Masturbation: Is It Wrong?”](#)
- [“You Can Be Single & Sexual”](#)
- [“Sexual Boundaries for Singles”](#)
- [“Should You Tell Your Partner About Your Sexual Past?”](#)

Other Ministries and Book Recommendations:

- [MyCounselor.Online](#)
- [7 Myths About Singleness - Sam Allberry](#)
- [Born Again This Way - Rachel Gilson](#)
- [Unwanted - Jay Stringer](#)
- [Embodied - Preston Sprinkle](#)
- [SHE Recovery](#)
- [Pure Desire](#)



Thank you!

Friend, Thank you for your bravery to join a small group and reading *Her Freedom Journey*!

The ministry of Authentic Intimacy exists to encourage you on this journey as we continue to develop resources and a community for men and women. We have podcasts, blogs, books, conferences, trainings, webinars, and other materials to help you apply the biblical narrative to the questions and problems you may face related to sexuality. You are not alone!



Finally, we would love to hear from you! Please let us know about your group experience and any feedback you have as we strive to serve God's people more effectively.

All for Him,

Fuli and Foy



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Authentic Intimacy Resources

Check out our website for the latest blogs and Q&As covering topics such as parenting, marriage, singleness, healing, and recovery.



Java with Juli Podcast

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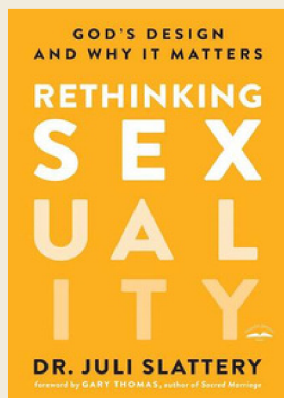
Sexual Discipleship®

This platform equips leaders to the call to make disciples while answering some of the toughest questions about faith and sexuality. Learn more at sexualdiscipleship.com.



Authentic Intimacy Membership

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Rethinking Sexuality by Dr. Juli Slattery

"To the extent we refuse to talk about tough sexual issues, we allow culture to define God's character and truth on sexuality."



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