

A Personal Question

Q

How can I stop **masturbating?**

A

When I answered a similar question a few years ago, I stated that I believe that masturbation isn't something Christian young people should be engaging in.

And you know what? Every single letter I got after that—including letters from adults—told me that that was the wrong thing to say. I could only conclude that everyone who wrote to me thought that masturbation is something Christian young people *should* be doing.

With all due respect to the people who took time to write to me (for which I'm grateful—if no one did, I'd have no column!), I cannot buy into that idea.

Is anyone seriously prepared to argue that Jesus would have engaged in masturbation? (I'm old-fashioned enough to be nervous about even *mentioning* Jesus and that particular activity in the same sentence. It sounds blasphemous to me!)

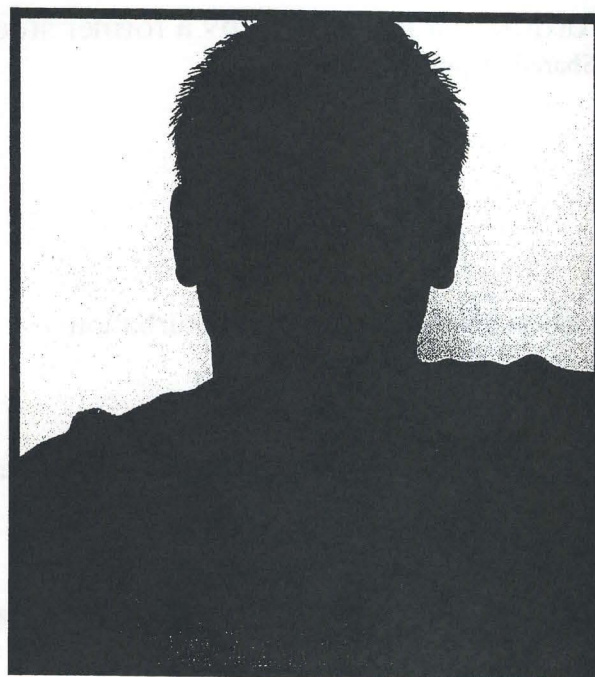
I think that if Jesus were writing this column and He had to answer this question, He wouldn't tell you it's "OK" and "natural" and all the other things people say about masturbation when they write to me. So since I don't think Jesus would tell you it's OK, I'm not going to tell you that either.

Now let's talk about how to break this habit.

1. Admit that you need to stop. People don't break habits that they don't feel they need to break.

2. Change your environment. People form habits by doing the same things again and again, often in the same place and at the same time.

Stop lying in bed and allowing your mind to dwell on thoughts that are less than pure. Get up! Have devotions. Ask God to take away the desire. Quoting



Joel D. Springer / Model not subject of column

my former pastor, Elder C. D. Brooks: "You cannot pray and sin at the same time."

Channel your "energy" into something useful. Exercise, help out around the house, help someone else.

3. Change your viewing habits. The reality is that you can't gain the victory over this habit until you stop looking at things that are sexually stimulating. I know that's difficult to do in a society that bombards us with sex and sexually charged images, sights, and sounds almost everywhere.

You simply *cannot* watch, read, listen to, or look at everything and everyone out there. In fact, even though this is hard to admit, you can't even watch, read, listen to, or look at *most* things out there.

While this is *really* going to get me in trouble, it's the truth: you have to be careful where you look even when you go to church. You have to learn how to turn your head *there*, too. Sad to say, modesty long ago lost the battle to fashion, even in our church.

The good news is—you *can* overcome! Yes, you can! There is no sin for which there is no victory, thanks to Jesus Christ. ■

Insight 32 (March 24, 2001) = 3.



Elder D. C. Edmond is youth director for the South Central Conference, located in Nashville, Tennessee. He and his wife, Jill, have two children, Courtney Michelle, 18, a freshman at Oakwood College, and Robert James (R.J.), 14, a freshman at Madison Academy.

Got a question that's tugging at your heart?

Send it to: All About Love, INSIGHT, 55 W. Oak Ridge Dr., Hagerstown, MD 21740-7390. E-mail: insight@rhpa.org.