

Lives Changed through Living Waters.



Living Waters is a Christ-centered discipleship/ministry program for men and women seeking healing in areas of sexual and relational brokenness including pornography addiction,

codependency, sexual addiction, homosexuality, sexual ambivalence, childhood sexual abuse, transgender issues, and difficulty in establishing and sustaining healthy relationships. We will be using the newly revised Living Waters guidebook.

Here are some powerful testimonies from participants who had their lives changed in the Living Waters program through the power of Jesus Christ. These quotes are used with the permission of the participants.

I found the entire program to be informative and eye opening, and the leadership team was open, approachable and knowledgeable.

A male participant.

Living Waters diffuses a lot of ignorance and lies about unwanted same-sex attraction and being a Christian.

A female participant.

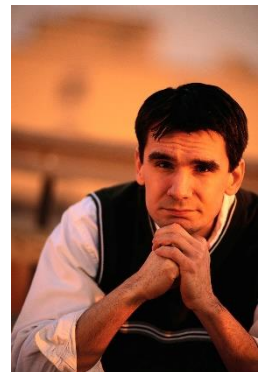


I grew up in a very dysfunctional family consisting of a schizophrenic father and an emotionally impaired mother. My parents divorced when I was four. Throughout my childhood I had relationship issues with my mother as she was too ill to connect with me in a healthy way. When I was 15 I started experimenting with alcohol and soon after that, drugs. I lived a reckless but somewhat responsible life in my 20's. I was a heavy drinker but was able to keep jobs and excel at them. My mother was pretty much out of my life then and my father became more and more a responsibility and a burden because of his perverse and bizarre behavior. My emotions ran high and anger became my best friend. It seemed like people respected my boundaries because of my anger.

When I got married I came to the Lord and He started delivering me from the baggage of my life. He guided me to spiritual warfare Bible studies and Christian recovery groups. I attended Celebrate Recovery for support and then Living Waters. At Living Waters I learned to focus mostly on yielding my pain and anxiety onto Jesus and receiving His peace. The focus was intimacy with Jesus – the One who is my wholeness. I was able to gain a lot of perspective in my recovery because of Living Waters and have progressed significantly in my recovery over anger. Jesus is my protector now!

A female participant

I guess I would have to subtitle my testimony "Love... yet, not loved well." By that I mean that I grew up with parents that loved me as best as they could in their own brokenness, but it was very difficult to get any praise or accolades for a job well done or encouragement when things did not go right. Both of my parents lacked emotional range, mostly being emotionally neutral and using anger to get their point across to my sister and me. Many of my childhood memories consist of other people (mostly relatives) berating me for doing something while my parents just stood off to the side emotionless or joining in if the offense was severe enough. Thus, my perception was that to receive any response from them meant I had to be perfect in



my endeavors (or at least as close to perfect as I could be). Add onto this feelings of rejection from others in school (bullying, name calling, rejection from girls, etc.) and I was a ticking time bomb, unable to show much emotion or relieve the stress related to my perfectionism and feelings of rejection. Instead, I stifled the emotion ("Men don't feel.") and sought other avenues of emotional and stress release. Enter pornography and masturbation, which became my addiction.

I remember that first look at a pornographic magazine at the age of 11 or 12. I didn't read much into it at that time, but it must have had an effect on me because I sought solace in it a few years later as puberty hit me in full stride. Through porn I sought release from the stress and emotions stirred up in me. I discovered my own father's pornography magazines which I used often in my teens and twenties. The internet came when I was in college and graduate school, and that was when the addiction really accelerated. I felt no urgency to date, fall in love, or get married. To me, that was additional stress and time away from my addictions.

Finally, I married at age 30 to a woman with three children of her own. I stepped haphazardly into the father figure role for her children. I failed both as a husband and a stepfather, treating all of them with the lack of emotion and lack of love and attention with which I had been treated as a child and young adult. All the while, my addictions deepened further as the stresses of marriage, parenting, and work just piled up on me. I was caught using pornography many times by my wife and made promise after promise to quit, only to return to it after a short time of sobriety. I was caught in the cycle of addiction with no way out in sight.

My world of addiction finally came crashing down late in 2013. I hit a major downward spiral at that time precipitated by two major revelations. First, during one of our many arguments, my wife revealed that my mother had told her that my father had an extramarital affair when I was a child. That was a fact that I was completely unaware of until that time. Second, and perhaps more devastating, was that my teen stepdaughter was suffering the consequences of significant sins that she was involved in. These facts, combined with a crumbling marriage and troubling times at work, sent me into the online chats and dating sites on top of the pornography. An encounter at one of the dating sites led to inappropriate behavior with another woman that lasted for almost a month. One day I was working from home and that woman contacted me and said that if I did not pay her \$1,500 she would post evidence of my actions to my entire contact list on social media. Needless to say, I was terrified. I came clean to my wife and my stepdaughter that day. All trust in me was gone, and I still work on regaining that trust to this day.

Once my addiction world crashed and burned, my wife gave me the ultimatum to get help or she was leaving me. I opted for the help and was referred to Dan Hitz and Living Waters by my church's family life minister. I met with Dan for individual counseling for eight months and then entered the Living Waters program in September of 2014. Today, I can say that I am well on the road to recovery, but I still have a long way to go. My wife and I are working on our marriage, and I am working on mending the relationships with my stepchildren. I am now more active in my church, taking on a mentor, joining a men's life small group, and taking on more volunteer activities to help those in need. I feel like a great weight was lifted from my heart and my soul, and I look forward to sharing my story with others in the hope that it will help others to see what God can accomplish through healing. I quote my mentor frequently to remind me of the long path I've achieved in recovery and how far I still have to go, "I'm not what I can be... and I'm not what I should be... but thank God, I'm not what I used to be."

A male participant



If you or someone you love is struggling with sexual or relational difficulties, there is hope and healing through the power of Jesus

Christ. Call us and ask about attending the next Living Waters program. (586) 739-5114

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