

**I REMEMBER RUNNING  
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# Walk Free

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## Breaking the bondage of pornography by Lloyd Vandenberg

I grew up in Hamilton, Ontario, where I remember hearing the Ten Commandments read every Sunday morning in the Free Reformed Church I attended. I also remember being told every Sunday that I was a sinner. Although I prayed the "sinner's prayer" many times, I never experienced any assurance of salvation.

My turning point came on July 1, 1980. The church I attended in Brantford, Ontario, had planned a Canada Day rally in a local football field. Jack West, a highly respected evangelist, was booked to speak and the choir spent weeks preparing. They expected a thousand people to come, but the day was so cold and windy that only about thirty people showed up. I had worked that day, but I came, still dressed in my work clothes.

At the close of his sermon, Jack West said, "If you have a heavy load of sin and you want it taken away, repent of your sin and give your life to Jesus." I wanted to respond, but I was too ashamed of my work clothes to go forward. Thankfully, one of the ladies there asked me why I hadn't gone up. When I told her, she called Jack West over and he led me to Christ with a simple prayer. Something inside me changed. I remember running like a deer across a field. I felt so free and forgiven.

For about two years, it was like God put me in a greenhouse where I grew like a tender plant. Then it felt like the windows were taken out. The cold, harsh winds of temptation blew in and I began to fail in my walk with the Lord.

When I was a child, I was molested once. As a result of that and the subsequent choices I made, I became hopelessly addicted to pornography.

I got married when I was 21 and thought marriage would resolve my struggle. Sadly, it didn't. In fact, it only compounded the problem. I began to work in ministry and, although many good things happened, a deep sadness and depression overshadowed my life. I was bound in my thought life. I never physically committed adultery, but in my thoughts I failed miserably.

I tried everything to get free—fasting, praying, memorizing Scripture, and reading books on freedom. In his small booklet called *Two of Me: The Struggle with Sin*, Dave Wilkerson told a story that taught me an important truth.

When Abraham Lincoln declared the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, slavery was legally abolished. But many slaves continued working for their owners, either because they couldn't bring themselves to believe the news or because deceitful owners lied to them, saying it was all a false rumour. Some slaves remained in bondage for years before they finally realized they'd been lied to.

The Lord said to me, "Lloyd, you are that slave!" The book then pointed me to Romans 6:11 – "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." In other words, I had to think of myself as a free man and believe what the Word of God said. I started looking at myself in the mirror in the mornings and declaring, "I am looking at a free man!"

Things improved, but I was still failing in my thought life. When I asked my wife what I should do, she didn't condemn me. Instead, she prayed and battled alongside me. One day she suggested I share my battle with her parents. My inner response was, "I'd rather eat crushed glass." But I was desperate and during a family devotional time at their place, I asked them to pray that God would give me a pure thought life.

Instantly, the bondage I had felt for years was broken. I felt an incredible sense of freedom. For six months I experienced victory over my addiction. Then I had an argument with my mother-in-law. I got angry and proud. I went to bed that night with a wicked imagination plaguing my mind again. I prayed and confessed, "I am a free man," but nothing seemed to help.

The next morning I apologized to her. Immediately my mind was free from impurity again. I wondered what was going on until I felt directed to James 4:6, "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" I realized that freedom is the fruit of a humble life. Walking in pride cut me off from the grace of God, the source of my freedom.

Although I was experiencing greater freedom, I knew television was the source of an ongoing battle with temptation. I would be flipping through the channels, see something and be hooked. When I told my wife about my struggle with the TV, we agreed to get rid of it, and my freedom was sealed. In recent years, we've purchased a TV again so our children can do video home schooling. But we've stayed unconnected to cable, satellite or even our aerial.

I've been free for about 15 years now, and I want to let everyone know that it is possible to walk in freedom and purity. I am a testimony to the power of God's grace to make and keep a man free!

**Lloyd Vandenberg** regularly shares his testimony in churches and with men's groups. He can be reached at [lhv36@yahoo.com](mailto:lhv36@yahoo.com). See <http://www.ngministry.org> You can hear the testimony there as well.