



One of the most effective formations in military history was the *testudo* (tortoise) of the Roman army. Soldiers locked their shields together to overcome incredible odds, and could withstand arrows, spears, and even chariots. In the movie *Gladiator*, Russell Crowe used the tortoise formation in the first battle scene in the Coliseum to win the battle despite being heavily outnumbered.

A recent survey of 10,000 Christian men revealed that 53% had used pornography in the last week, and another survey indicated that 48% of senior boys at a Catholic high school were using pornography on a weekly basis (MyHouseKansas.org). No matter how often you have struggled, here are seven strategies for long-term freedom, which will also help you experience more love, happiness, intimacy, and integrity in your life! Though men usually struggle more than women with pornography, many of the following strategies apply to the growing number of women who need help as well.

**1) Boundaries** - Before the internet, people had to go out of their way to access pornography, but now we have to go out of our way to avoid pornography. The anonymity, affordability and accessibility of internet pornography can be extremely difficult to break free from. Accountability and filtering software for computers, cell phones, iPads, and iPods (CovenantEyes.com, SafeEyes.com & Bsecure.com) blocks pornography and provides strength and teamwork through weekly reports of internet activity that are sent to people that you trust. It really helps to stay away from tempting situations like channel surfing, magazine racks, hotels with pornographic videos (try CleanHotels.com), too much alcohol, going to bed after your wife, swimsuit calendars, etc.

**2) God, Sexuality, and Closer Intimacy** - One of the best sources of encouragement for better intimacy and sexual integrity is a collection of positive and new Catholic teachings about sexuality, love, and marriage! Married couples are seriously missing out on better intimacy and joy in their bedrooms if they haven't heard about God's amazing plan for love and intimacy! Catholic resources about human sexuality have exploded in the last 5-10 years thanks to Pope John Paul II, who wrote nearly two-thirds of what the Church has ever taught about sexuality and marriage in the *Theology of the Body* (TOB). There are TOB classes at many Churches, and many parents and youth ministers are using TOB resources to help their teens prepare for long-lasting and happy marriages. Christopher West, Jason Evert, and Mary Shivanandan are amazing speakers with great TOB CDs, articles and resources at ChristopherWest.com, Chastity.com, and ImagoDei-TOB.org. Thousands of teens and young adults are finding ways to redirect desire through lots of time with TOB resources, and these young people tend to have much more happiness in their lives and better relationships. An online program called ReclaimSexualHealth.com combines TOB concepts with advanced

research and brain science to help people break free from pornography as well.

**3) Myths about Pornography** - Matt Fradd has an amazing Catholic website called [ThePornEffect.com](http://ThePornEffect.com) that includes inspiring conversion stories from men and women who used to work in the pornography industry. Physical and emotional trauma often takes place during the filming of pornography which is edited from the final product. Sometimes pornography actresses have to be taken to hospitals after being filmed to surgically repair the damage that had been done to their bodies. According to Dr. Mary Anne Layden, women who have been in the pornography industry have a 25% chance of being married for more than three years. There is a common myth that pornography enhances intimacy, but many psychologists and marriage counselors have observed increased rates of loneliness and erectile dysfunction for men who use pornography. Instead of improving relationships, a large survey of divorce lawyers showed a strong connection between pornography use and divorce, and numerous studies have shown strong ties between pornography and infidelity.

**4) Teamwork & Accountability** - Breaking free long-term from pornography is a *team-sport*. Just like the Roman army's tortoise formation, we need to step up and fight together with other men. Dan Spencer with the National Fellowship of Catholic Men - [nfcmenUSA.org](http://nfcmenUSA.org) has done great work with men's accountability groups and resources for sexual integrity. There are a number of other ministries that help men plug into teamwork and accountability including Christ Renews His Parish, That Man is You, Cursillo, and The King's Men. FOCUS and Saint Paul's Outreach provide great friendships and accountability to live with sexual integrity in college. Being open and honest with other men is often doing them a favor, and can encourage them to be real about struggles with lust that most Catholic men need accountability for. Men who are compulsively using pornography often need 12-step groups and counseling for long-term freedom. [MyHouseKansas.org](http://MyHouseKansas.org) has information about a 12-step group that over 150 Catholic men have attended, as well as other national 12-step groups.

**5) Pray or Become Prey** - Growing in your spiritual life through daily prayer, the daily Mass readings, reading about the saint of the day, listening to Catholic radio and Christian music can be very helpful to break free from lust. Being open and honest with priests during Confession, receiving the Eucharist at Mass every week, Eucharistic Adoration, and spiritual direction are incredibly beneficial for freedom from pornography as well. Find a priest that you feel comfortable with and go to Confession with that same priest on a monthly basis or more as needed. Foster devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and St. Michael the Archangel. St. Benedict medals can be very helpful and fasting has helped many people break free from lust as well. Certain priests, religious, and lay people are trained in spiritual direction, and regular spiritual direction provides tremendous encouragement to grow in your prayer life.

**6) Counseling and Marriage Enrichment** - Counseling can identify some of the root causes of pornography use, while helping couples build better trust, intimacy, and communication. Sam Meier is available for counseling in the Kansas City area - 913-647-0378. There are a growing number of Catholic therapists who provide telephone counseling and teleconference groups for pornography addiction including Dr. Peter Kleponis, Ron Kaufmann, Dan Spadaro, and Melissa Guzik. Worldwide Marriage Encounter - [wwme.org](http://wwme.org) can help to drastically improve communication as well as emotional, spiritual and physical intimacy in marriages. Surveys indicate that 90% of couples literally fall back in love with each other through Marriage Encounter weekends. Retrouvaille is a Catholic program that is incredibly helpful for couples who are experiencing a difficult time or crisis in their marriage - [Retrouvaille.org](http://Retrouvaille.org). Retrouvaille has saved over 100,000 marriages and has an 80% success rate!

**7) Support for Women** - Women whose loved ones are struggling with pornography often experience feelings of trauma, anger, loneliness, and anxiety. Women can be tremendously helped by reading Theology of the Body resources and growing in their prayer life. Most couples who have successfully healed from the effects of pornography addiction started the healing journey because of brave women who demanded change. Women who are in relationships with men who are addicted to pornography often need professional counseling along with spousal support groups to process through the painful emotions. Several national support groups including SANON help to empower and affirm women in their healing process. Dr. Peter Kleponis has great information about spousal support and healing on his inspiring website called [IntegrityRestored.com](http://IntegrityRestored.com).

There are an increasing amount of women who have needed support to break free from lust, infidelity, and pornography as well. There are resources and links on female pornography addiction that are available at [ThePornEffect.com](http://ThePornEffect.com), [MyHouseKansas.org](http://MyHouseKansas.org) and many other websites.

**You are not alone and it takes courage to reach out for help, and who knows what God will do through you some day to help others ... and to turn your mess into a message! Check-out [MyHouseKansas.org](http://MyHouseKansas.org) for real stories and more information about long-term freedom.**

(This form was updated in February of 2012. The resources and counselors on this handout are not specifically endorsed by the My House Initiative.)