

## HR180 Testimony from Pastor George Williams, CityLight Church, Toledo Ohio

My Name is Pastor George Williams and I pastor a church community called CityLight Church. We are located in what is known as the "red light" district of Toledo. When we moved into our building this was not specifically intentional to our vision, other than we wanted to be where people needed hope.

I have pastored for 7 years now and I can not tell you how many times I have gotten a text from a guy in my church. "Hey can we talk?" I know the conversation very well. "I am struggling with a porn addiction". They come to me looking for help. As you may know, the statistics are that approximately 70% of men visit porn sites monthly. These numbers do not drop at all among church goers. That means that of every 10 men in my church, 7 of them view porn at least monthly and that is just the men.

As my wife and I have continued in ministry, my wife has informed me to my total surprise that this is not a problem exclusively with men. She has seen a drastic increase of women coming to her with their own set up undesired consequences of pornography use. As you can imagine, our work is cut out for us.

I have seen the struggle of men fighting to stay clean in an over-sexualized world.  
I have sat with the couple dealing with the effects it has had on their marriage: lack of intimacy, infidelity, and self image issues.  
I have listened to the confession of a man losing hours of productivity at work from the compulsion of pornography.  
I have heard the words of self-hatred from young men that find themselves not able to break free.  
I have grieved with a dad that finds the digital trail of his 10 year old daughter who he thought he had protected, receiving porn through group text messages from friends at school.  
I could go on all day. These are just a few that come to mind.

I had a problem though. For a long time I found myself unqualified to give any advice or direction. For years I dealt with the same addiction that those looking for help were coming to me for help with. It was the blind leading the blind.

I am thankful for the strong message that I recieved from Christian faith communities that taught and encouraged healthy sexuality in the context of marriage and that pornography was and is unhealthy for a person to consume. This message alone helped build at least an understanding in me that I had to find a way out. Through the help of God's grace, a good accountability friend, a merciful wife and some great Christian resources, I not only have begun the process of recovery but have developed groups within our church and beyond that are helping men find freedom.

In our over-sexualized culture with instant access at our fingertips who will protect our people from those that exploit our biology? Who will stop the flow of sexual images wanting to hook our children's minds far earlier than what good parents even have words to help educate their young ones? In our current conditions, we are in a losing battle. Due to the early age that children are being exposed to pornography and the overwhelming sexual targeting of men and women through the internet, as a pastor at best, I can only set up a hospital for those that are affected. Culturally, I stand no chance helping anyone avoid the exposure to pornography.

I am grateful for House Resolution 180 and everyone that has worked on it. Maybe this will lay the groundwork for change for a society that is currently being drawn into a black hole of pornography and sexual addiction.