

WHAT I'VE LEARNED – *at least some of it*

Chris Boschman – Aug 10, 2021

- **Identity In Christ** – We are Children of God, unconditionally loved and accepted. Our identity is not based on our actions, our successes, our failures. Dave said once – “I am far more than my mistakes – they don’t define me, Jesus does!” Don’t believe the lies that the enemy is constantly feeding you. We are worthy of love, forgiveness, grace, community, freedom, and victory not because of anything we’ve done, but because of EVERYTHING HE’S DONE! A phrase I loved from one of Cam’s talks last year – “God came to take all of our worst and give us all of His best!” We are co-heirs with Christ! Galatians 4:4-7 - *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.* How differently would we live if we truly believed this in our heart?
- **Motivational Seeker** – Motivation can be a very strong force. On the flip side, lack of motivation can be an equally strong force in the opposite direction. What is driving us to choose this journey, to making the decision to run from our addiction and walk in freedom? Our reasons why must be significant and real! Are we considering the legacy we will leave behind? Think about your wife, your kids, your extended family, your work, your church, and friends. All these people are affected by our actions – directly or indirectly. What would our lives look like in 5 years if we don’t make this decision? Conversely, think about what your life could look like if you do?! If we find the courage to do whatever it takes to win this battle! Find your motivation! Write them down, keep them close by so you can look at them when you are struggling or feeling like you have no hope!
- **Humility & Repentance** – Drop the pride, release our control, admit that we can’t do this on our own. We need God, we need each other. Turn away from our old selves and move towards the life that God has for us. God promises in 2 Chronicles 7:14 - *if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.* “The Holy Spirit convicts us of wrongdoing, if we humble ourselves and submit our guilt and shame, we can be forgiven and walk in victory!” – D.C.
- **Temptation** \neq **Relapse** – Being tempted is not sin! We can’t always control what will come into our line of sight, or what will enter our brain as a thought. What we can control is how we react to those images and thoughts. Temptation isn’t unique to us, we can’t say “you don’t understand what it’s like for me, I get tempted way worse than anyone else...” Hebrews 4:14-16 - *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw*

near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We talk about bouncing eyes (Job 31:1 – I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.) and capturing thoughts (2 Cor. 10:5 – ...and we take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ.) – these actions need to be practiced, they can become reflexive. Using a rubber band is a very successful tool to help with this type of behaviour. Dave also gave us a great talk on facing temptation about a year ago. Here are 5 steps he recommended:

- **Recognize** – be aware/present – don't let thoughts build a nest in your brain.
- **Reject** – reject the temptation out loud – speak against it.
- **Repent** – repent of any failure to fight – He is faithful and just to forgive.
- **Reach** – reach out to your wingman/regroup brothers – recovery is a team sport.
- **Replace** – replace the temptation, fill your mind with other things/scripture.

We all know 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 - So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

- **Boundaries & Consequences** – Critical to our journey! We must make wise decisions regarding what we give ourselves access to. To our adolescent minds, these wise boundaries may sometimes seem too restrictive. But if we can't stop ourselves from getting around Covenant Eyes on our phone or other devices, then maybe we need to get a dumb phone for a while. Boundaries are just that, guardrails that will keep us from driving off the cliff. It's not how close we can get to danger without falling off, it needs to be how far can we stay away from the edge, so we don't have an opportunity to go over it! This is short term pain for long term gain. These boundaries will need to be discussed and agreed upon with our spouses. We will also need to set up some consequences. And not consequences like "no ice-cream tonight." These consequences need to have teeth, they need to be enough of a deterrent so that when it comes time to make the decision of relapse or not, we will stay on the side of safety. If we don't have a solid set of boundaries and consequences written down somewhere (and shared with your spouse/wingman) then we are just flying by the seat of our pants. And we all know how well that's gone for us so far. Set firm boundaries and consequences and be sure to live by them.
- **Daily (and I mean DAILY) Disciplines** – This has been one of the most beneficial aspects of my journey. Not expecting a pat on the back for either of these numbers, but I am currently on a 625 day streak in my Bible app – reading through the Old & New Testament as well as 99 completed Recovery based reading plans. On RTribe (Four Streams Coaching) I have a 739 consecutive day check-in streak. These are just numbers, but they point to something that is crucial to success in this journey. "Habitual practices build momentum!" D.C. We don't want to be doing these things just to be checking a box, but sometimes it will be just that. We won't always "feel" like doing devotions, or praying, or making phone calls, but we DO them anyway – because habitual practices build momentum. Our brains are so programmed to think one way, we need to alter our current way of thinking. Romans 12:1-2 - *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,*

which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. How do we accomplish this? Daily disciplines!

- **Continual Connection** – We’ve heard it said many times – “the opposite of addiction is connection.” This statement could not be more accurate! We have spent most of our lives isolating, withdrawn to our own world of guilt, shame, and addiction. This must change! Proverbs 27:17 – *As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.* We have access to an amazing band of brothers! This regroup of 50+ are here for us constantly. Connection means reaching out when you’re triggered, making phone calls, engaging in the WhatsApp chat and attending groups regularly. These men are here to support, encourage and to call you to greatness! That means both Grit and Grace when necessary.
- **True Accountability – WINGMAN!** – James 5:16 - *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.* This goes hand in hand with connection, but this is on a much deeper level. The wingman is someone we will meet with regularly. They will hold us accountable to our boundaries and ask the tough questions about how we are doing. We must commit to true authenticity and transparency when it comes to this relationship. My wingman has had a tremendous impact on my journey. Initially it was more of a one-way accountability. But over the last 2 ½ years, it has blossomed into an authentic, mutual accountability. Most of us know about Dave’s accountability background of 80+ years (give or take a year or 2). This type of relationship helps move us in the direction that God wants us to go and keeps us on the path that avoids destruction in all aspects of life. If you don’t have a wingman, get one!
- **Patience Is A Virtue** – This is a tough one for most of us. Patience is necessary not only with our own journey, but mostly towards our wives and their journey. Our recovery and their recovery won’t occur at the same pace. We’ve heard the analogy of our addictions causing a car wreck. Our wives were passengers in a vehicle that has just been T-boned at 50 miles an hour. Through no fault of their own, they are now dealing with a significant trauma that will take months, if not years to heal (and in some cases will never completely heal.) We can’t expect them to just “get over it” now that we’ve finally admitted what we’ve been doing for X number of years. This is a long, difficult process that will take time and a tremendous amount of patience from us. We need to validate her pain and do *whatever it takes* to help her heal. Patience my brothers.
- **Comparison is Catastrophic** – There are over 50 men associated in ReGroup. Every single one of them has a different story, with different characters and various endings (most of which haven’t been written yet.) Our journeys, while on a parallel track, will not look the same or go at the same rate. It is not healthy to compare where you are at to where other brothers are at. Comparing up – leads to discouragement and feeling inadequate. Comparing down – leads to arrogance and being unwilling to accept criticism – you think you’ve arrived. Looking to others for hope and inspiration can be motivating, but we must not let that get us down when we aren’t as far along as we’d like to be. The journey

of 1000 miles begins with a single step. We can't get to 1000 days without getting to 1, 30, 50 or 100 first.

Another thing we can't compare is the pain that we've caused our wives and families. I was talking to Doug Weiss about this on a supervision call, women can be hurt just as deeply by us acting out with porn as they would be if we acted outside the marriage. Betrayal is betrayal, trauma is trauma. Don't mistakenly believe that what we've done isn't nearly as bad as what so-and-so has done – and vice versa – don't mistakenly believe that so-and-so hasn't caused nearly as much pain as I have with all the extra stuff that I've done. Stay far away from any sort of comparison.

- **I Don't "Got This"** – Avoid complacency! Let's go back to 1 Corinthians 10:12 - *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!* The enemy wants you to believe that you've got this licked. I don't need to wear this rubber band anymore. I don't need to reach out today. I don't need to work on recovery material everyday anymore. I can watch that questionable movie, I'll be fine. This is what Dave calls the Slow Erosion. We let little things slip here and there – none of them singularly causing a drastic change in our recovery, but over time, they add up to letting our guard down, becoming complacent with our boundaries. The enemy wants to normalize evil – he desensitizes us to our triggers. We have to remain on guard at all times continuing to be aware and sensitive to our triggers and what we need to do when they come – 'cause they will come! Avoiding complacency is paramount to finding freedom.
- **GOD DOESN'T WASTE PAIN** – If you asked me 969 days ago, if I thought I'd be talking to 40 men about how they can be free from their addiction to pornography, I'd have said you were crazy. Thirty years of guilt, shame, condemnation, isolation, unworthiness and failure had me believing that I was unlovable, unforgivable, hopeless and beyond change. Ephesians 2:8-10 - *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.* God can and will use our story to help and impact others. God will give us a passion and a purpose for our lives. Freedom from pornography is not just about "not watching porn." God calls us to so much more for our lives. Our story can give others HOPE! Not all of us will be called to become Certified Sex Addiction Recovery Coaches, but that doesn't mean God won't use us for His glory in many other ways.