

# *Who Do I Think I Am?*

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Child of God, Child of the Covenant,  
Disciple of Christ

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# Knowing Myself And God's Characteristics Help Me Fight Against Pornography



**Why Do People Use**

**Pornography?**



*I have seen  
in my clinical practice:*

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**Loneliness**

**Autonomy**

**Power**

**Being Desired**

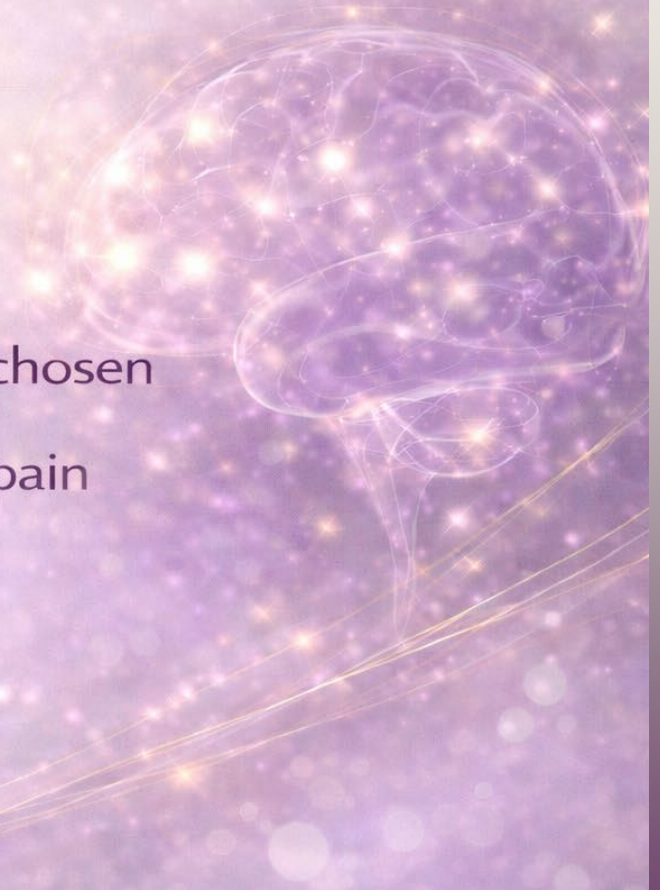
**Comfort**

**Relief**

# *Pseudoconnection*

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- Pornography offers immediate pretend connection
- Simulates being seen, wanted, chosen
- Temporarily soothes relational pain



# *Autonomy*

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Some view pornography to reclaim autonomy.

- Especially when feeling controlled or powerless
- Fantasy can restore a sense of power

*“I want something that feels like mine.”*

# *Immediate Relief & Pleasure*

The brain seeks **relief** when distressed.

Pornography can provide:



**Fast dopamine**

**Temporary emotional quiet**



**Escape from discomfort**

It works—briefly.

# *Fantasy Is Escape*

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- To feel wanted
- To feel nurtured
- To avoid pressure

*“I don’t have to perform.”*

# POWER

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- To feel in control
- To avoid vulnerability
- To escape responsibility

# *Boredom & The Brain*

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ADHD and anxious  
brains struggle  
with low stimulation.



# Core Emotional Wounds

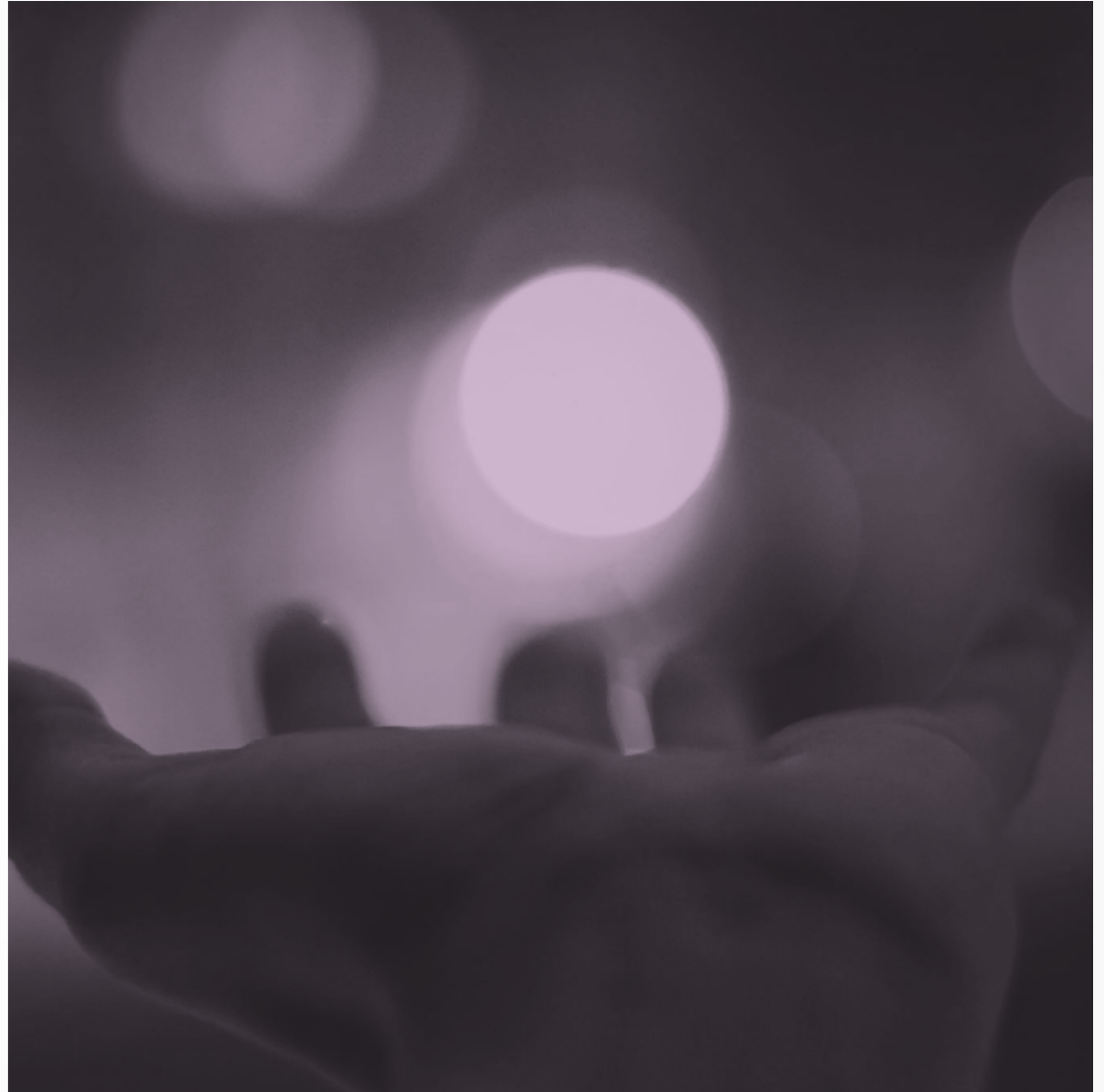
**Pornography can replay familiar emotional scripts.**

- ▶ **“I have always had to earn attention to feel valued, in pornography I can pretend I am valued.”**



# Emotional Scripts

**“People have told  
me I am too much,  
when I watch  
pornography I don’t  
have to worry about  
being dismissed”**



# Limits with Emotional Awareness

- Behavior often occurs before awareness
- Many people do not know what they are feeling



LIMITS

# “I’m really ashamed about what I find arousing”

- ▶ **The behavior of using sexual imagery does NOT change the Child of God status**
- ▶ **It is NOT inevitable someone will do criminal behavior**



# Research That Helps

**Utah State University  
Reductions in  
pornography use are  
associated with:**

- ▶ **increased  
emotional  
awareness**
- ▶ **improved ability  
to tolerate  
discomfort**
- ▶ **reduced reliance  
on avoidance  
strategies**



# Continued

- **Change occurred without focusing on moral condemnation (The intervention, ACT therapy, teaches acceptance of thoughts, urges, without judging and living values instead of impulsivity)**



# What To Do When Urges Strike



# Ride The Wave of the Urge

Riding out an urge without acting on it.

Urges are:

- **Temporary**
- **Bodily sensations**
- **Not commands**
- **Not your identity**



# Step 1

## Describe The Urge

- ▶ **“I am having an urge right now”**
- ▶ **Not, “SEE?!! I am never going to get over this I am disgusting (your thoughts are not your identity)”**
- ▶ **“The urge is a \_\_\_\_\_ on a scale from 1-10”**
- ▶ **Where do I notice it in my body?**

**“My brain is doing a brain-thing, making thoughts. This will pass.”**

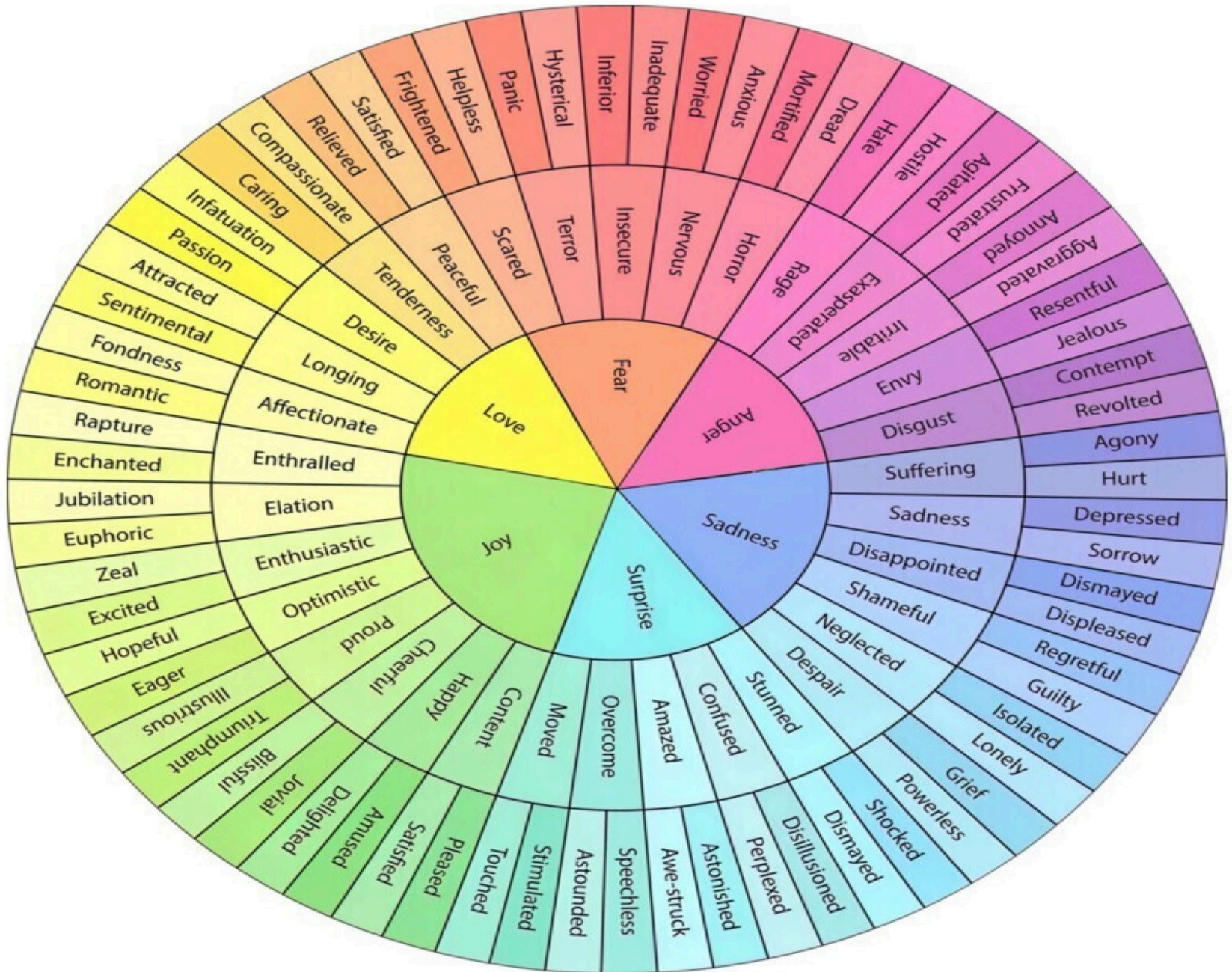
# Brains Can Be Dramatic



# Step 2

## What Am I feeling?





# Step 3

## What Do I Need?



► **Am I bored?**

► **Lonely? (even if friendships, risk for connection is scary for you. Instead of the terror of rejection try:**

► **“Its ok to be nervous. I can reach out to someone and offer them my friendship, thoughts, hello, etc. People need my friendship too. I have valuable things to offer**

## ➤ **Overwhelmed?**

- **Do I need to reduce the pressure on myself about what to expect and how much to expect it?**

## ➤ **An emotional release?**

- **Pornography can offer a sexual and emotional release but what else can I do with my body to get a release? Working out? Dance? Walking? Yoga?**
- **Do I need to cry?**
- **Hand on heart and asking self, “What do I need?”**

# What Do I Need Continued

- ▶ **Power in my life?**
  - ▶ **To set boundaries and limits with myself and others? (Am I afraid of being smothered emotionally by others?) or afraid of being perceived as needy?**
  - ▶ **To be desired, valued by others?**
    - ▶ **There is more to learn about our value and validation coming from God.**
- Understanding that fully and receiving it**





## Step 4 High five yourself

**You tolerated distress  
without acting on urges  
for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes**

- ▶ **You learned more  
about yourself**
- ▶ **Even if you acted on  
the urge this time**
- ▶ **Keep trying!!**



**“However late you think you are, however many chances you think you have missed, however many mistakes you feel you have made... I testify that you have not traveled beyond the reach of divine love. It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ’s Atonement shines.”**

■ By Jeffrey R. Holland

■ April 2012 General Conference



**“Some blessings come soon,  
some come late, and some don’t  
come until heaven; but for those  
who embrace the gospel of Jesus  
Christ, they come. That I  
personally witness. Don’t you  
quit. You keep walking. You  
keep trying. There is help and  
happiness ahead.”**

- ▶ “Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders Among You”
- ▶ April 2016 General Conference
- ▶ By Jeffrey R. Holland

## Step 5

**Accept that your  
brain may  
continue to  
provide urges**

**(Change what this  
means about you)**

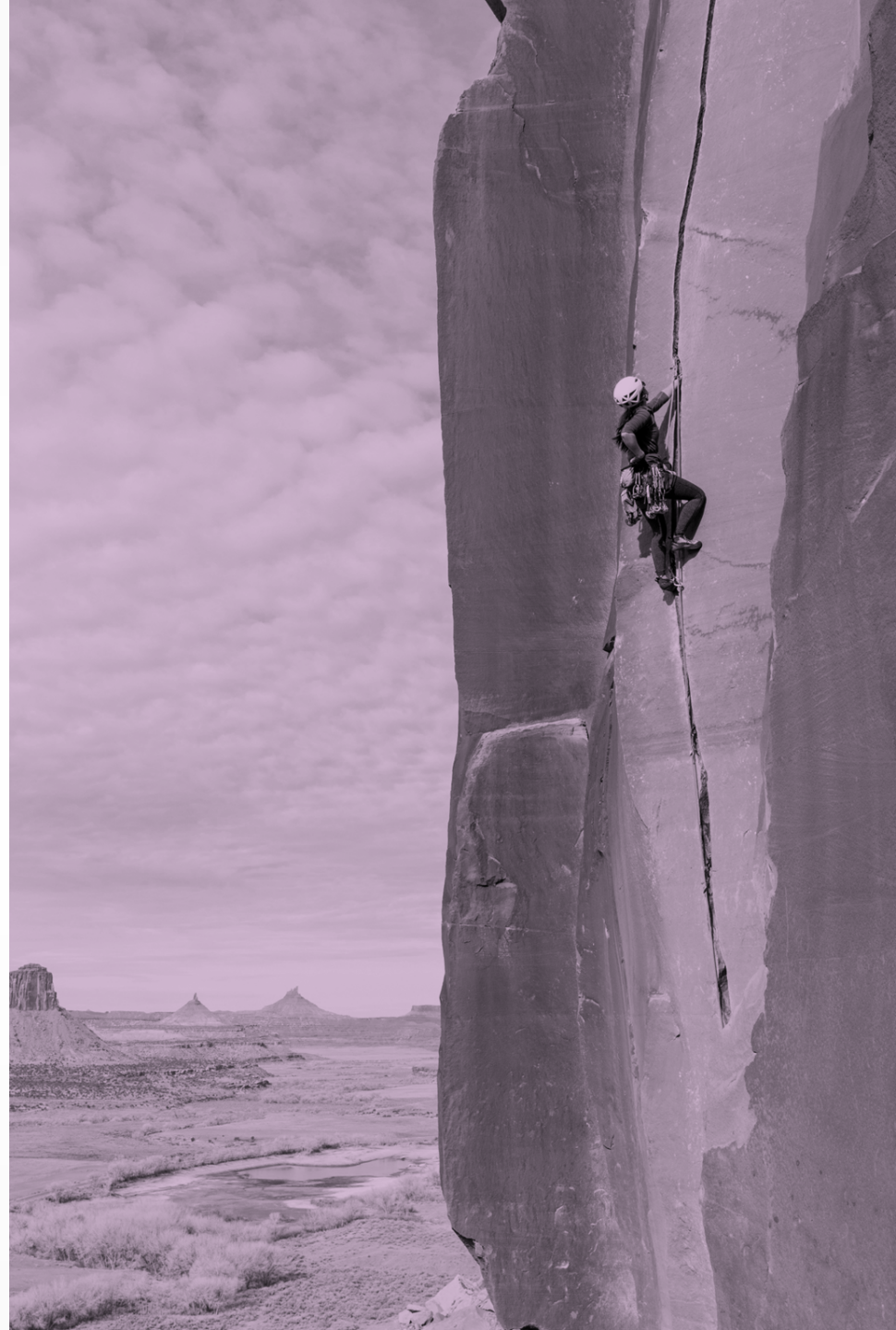


# Take Responsibility Without Self Hatred (you are like the rest of us)

**“Sometimes I choose to use pornography to feel better. I don’t have to be afraid of future me. I can pause and make choices”**

## **DOESN’T MEAN**

- ▶ **I am worse than other people.**
- ▶ **Other’s sins aren’t as bad as mine**
- ▶ **Admitting this means you have to hate yourself**





**I've Learned  
About Myself  
What Can I  
Learn About  
God?**



# Jesus Has High Distress Tolerance

- ▶ Stayed present with anguish in Gethsemane
- ▶ “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42)



# Jesus Has Perfect Empathy

- ▶ He was despised and rejected... a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3)
- ▶ “In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15)
- ▶ Alma 7 11-12 “And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind... that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people...”



# Jesus: Thoughtful, Not Impulsive

- In the temple, Jesus prepared before acting
- “He made a scourge of small cords” (John 2:15)
- Demonstrates restraint and values-based action
- Jesus acted with divine authority, not rage
- Power exercised with restraint
- Defense of sacred space, not emotional discharge



# He Is Merciful

**Once you and I have made a covenant with God, our relationship with Him becomes much closer than before our covenant. Now we are bound together. Because of our covenant with God, He will never tire in His efforts to help us, and we will never exhaust His merciful patience with us. Each of us has a special place in God’s heart. He has high hopes for us.”**

— Russell M. Nelson

“The Everlasting Covenant,” October 2022 General Conference, Liahona, Nov. 2022.



# He is Forgiving

**“The Savior  
wants to  
forgive. He  
is eager to  
forgive.”**

**Craig Cardon**



A person in a striped shirt and jeans is running away from the camera on a railway track. The track is made of gravel and concrete ties, leading towards a horizon under a cloudy sky. Trees line both sides of the track. The overall mood is one of pursuit or escape.

**What May Prevent People**

A purple arrow pointing to the right, located on the left side of the image.

**From Going to God**

# Incomplete View of God

## ► Repentance — Bible Dictionary (KJV)

“The Greek word of which this is the translation denotes a *change of mind*, a fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world. Since we are born into conditions of mortality, repentance comes to mean a turning of the heart and will to God, and a renunciation of sin to which we are naturally inclined.”

# Shame (Feels like, “Don’t look at me”)

Adam and Eve hid after  
shame entered, “Quick  
Hide!”

Hiding was not  
commanded by God

“Adam and his wife hid  
themselves” (Gen 3:8)



# God Finds Joy in Our Repentance

- ▶ **Yes, your repentance doesn't burden Jesus Christ; it brightens His joy!"**
- ▶ **"He's excited every time He sees us on our knees.**
- ▶ **He delights to forgive us because to Him we are delightful!"**



# References

- ▶ **Cardon, C. A. (2013). General Conference. The Savior Wants to Forgive.**
- ▶ **Runia, T. W. (2025, October). Your repentance doesn't burden Jesus Christ; it brightens Him joy. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints General Conference.**
- ▶ **Talmage, J. E. (1915). Jesus the Christ.**

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**Twohig, M. P., & Crosby, J. M. (2010/2012).**

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**Journal of Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity.**

**Twohig, M. P., et al. (2016).**

**Psychological flexibility and reductions in problematic pornography use.**

**Behavior Therapy.**

# Say Hello!



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