

# New post on Joe Dallas Online



## [In Case of Relapse](#)

by [Joe Dallas](#)

*Great effort is required to arrest decay and restore vigor.*



*-Horace*

"Relapse" mean "deterioration after a period of improvement." It's an enemy to avoid, and it makes life hard when it happens. But in the long run, guys who successfully keep it clean aren't necessarily guys who never relapsed. Rather, they're guys who knew how to handle their relapse after it happened, get back in the saddle, and prevent it from happening again.

Anytime you make changes for the better, you risk relapse, as anyone who's ever dieted, quit smoking, or given up a bad habit will confirm. To strive for something better is to risk going back to old ways, since we're creatures who are inclined to deeply ingrained patterns. We default back to what is familiar, a sad fact especially true of the man who's turned away from a pattern of sexual sin and is striving to stay on course. He should, from Day One, accept the fact that he'll be tempted to relapse. And that means he needs a relapse contingency.

### **Relapse is Always Possible; Never Inevitable**

You don't have to relapse, because although failure's common, it's not inevitable. So a relapse contingency isn't a way of giving yourself permission to relapse. It's what you put in place because of what *could* happen, not what *will* happen.

John wrote something along these lines when he said, “My little children, these things I write to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 2:1)

Notice the wording “I write to you so that you may not sin.” He’s saying “Don’t sin. You don’t have to. I’m writing to help you avoid it. But if you do sin, there’s hope, so don’t give up.”

So no, you don’t have to relapse. You don’t have to return to using porn, or to fornication, or to any kind of unclean behavior. But if you do, here are some steps you can take immediately.

**First, *notify*.** Decide now who you’d call in the event of a relapse. In most cases an accountability partner – someone you regularly talk and pray with who holds you accountable to your commitment to purity – is your best bet. A trusted friend, pastor or mentor will do as well. What matters is that you decide in advance who to call in case of relapse. Tell him what happened, and that you’ll need his prayers and support. There’s power in that, maybe more than you realize. What gets brought out into the open gets dealt with; what’s kept in the dark stays uncorrected.

**Second, *identify*.** With the help of whoever you notify, figure out what went wrong. I think most relapses aren’t mysteries. They happen because people slacked off on the basics: prayer time, reading the Word, accountability, fellowship. But there can be other reasons, so spend time exploring what you were doing before the relapse, what you could have done differently, and what you’ll do differently in the future to prevent this from happening again. Human error is a terrific textbook, so you may as well use it.

**Finally, *move it!*** Get back on track immediately. That means confessing the sin in prayer, of course, and holding tight to John’s promise in 1 John 1:9 that when we confess, He cleanses and forgives.

It also means taking the needed steps to help prevent it from happening again, and trying to learn from the relapse.

Then move it. You’ll accomplish nothing by wallowing in grief over a relapse, and there’s no reason to delay beginning again. Because if you refuse to start moving, you’re likely to

yield to something more severe, which is despair. Sexual sin you can repent of. But despair? Give in to that, and you're really finished.

You're protecting a treasure when you guard your purity, so apply yourself to its longevity the way you'd protect anything valuable. Recognizing its worth, you'll work hard to keep it, and to reject anything which threatens it.

**Joe Dallas** | March 28, 2016 at 1:56 pm | Tags: [Accountability](#), [Behavior](#), [Failure](#), [Father](#), [Friend](#), [Grief](#), [Help](#), [Jesus](#), [Jesus Christ](#), [John](#), [Needs](#), [pattern](#), [Porn](#), [Prayer](#), [Purity](#), [Relapse](#), [Self](#), [Sin](#), [Trust](#), [Writing](#) | Categories: [Keeping It Clean](#) | URL: <http://wp.me/p1BPyc-1ma>

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