There is a deep-rooted issue troubling many young believers—perhaps it’s troubling you too.

Several young people who recently gave their lives to Christ have reached out to me through calls and messages, saying things like:

“Man of God, ever since I got saved, I’ve really tried to stop engaging in sexual sin and watching pornography. But I still feel like I’m offending God because the images and memories of what I used to do keep flashing through my mind—even during prayer or Bible study. I feel unworthy, like I haven’t truly been forgiven or cleansed. I feel so discouraged, and it’s affecting my desire to serve God. What should I do?”

If you’ve been experiencing something similar, I want to tell you: you are not alone. The Bible says,

> “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” *(John 8:32, NKJV)*

What many believers don’t understand is this: God’s sanctification comes in two phases.

1. Instant Sanctification – At the Point of Salvation

There are some sinful desires and behaviors that God removes instantly the moment you surrender your life to Christ. For example: the urge to steal, use profanity, dress indecently, or abuse alcohol. These are changes many experience immediately after salvation.

2. Progressive Sanctification – A Process Over Time

There are other areas of your life that require time and a process for complete cleansing. That’s why in the Old Testament, different types of uncleanness required different durations for a person to be considered clean again—sometimes until evening, other times several days or even weeks—depending on the nature of the impurity.

Consider these examples:

- *“Whoever carries part of their carcass must wash his clothes,*

and he will be unclean until evening.” (Leviticus 11:25, NIV)

- *“Anyone who touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean until evening.”* (Leviticus 15:27, NIV)

- *“When she is cleansed from her discharge, she must count off seven days, and after that she will be ceremonially clean.”* (Leviticus 15:28, NIV)

These examples show that some impurities take time to be fully purified from. In the same way, though you have repented and turned away from pornography and sexual sin, the images and memories might still linger for a time. This does not mean God has not forgiven you. You have been forgiven! But your full inner sanctification is still ongoing.

Why does this take time?

Think of it this way: Why did God take Moses into the wilderness for 40 years before using him to deliver Israel? It was to strip him

of pride, self-reliance, and worldly identity—things that couldn’t be removed in a day. Likewise, the Israelites wandered 40 years in the desert so God could rid their hearts of idolatry and teach them to trust Him alone.

Even a speeding car cannot stop instantly—it must slow down first. Similarly, if you lived for years feeding your soul with sinful content, those things may take time to be fully purged from your mind. This is why sin must never be taken lightly.

Paul wrote:

> “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God.” *(1 Thessalonians 4:3–5, NIV)*

What should you do?

Don’t be discouraged. Continue staying away from all forms of impurity. Day by day, God will continue renewing your mind.

Eventually, those lustful images will fade—they’ll become like distant childhood memories.

But remember: sin has consequences. Don’t go back. Press on. Draw closer to God. Stay away from anything that can reignite temptation:

- Worldly movies and shows
- Lustful conversations
- Ungodly friendships
- Unfiltered use of social media

If platforms like Instagram are filling your mind with impurity, uninstall them. Most of what’s there doesn’t help your walk with Christ anyway. The Bible says:

> “Without wood, a fire goes out.” *(Proverbs 26:20a, NIV)*

So remove the “wood” that fuels the sinful fire. Create distance from anything that stirs up lust.

The Lord is cleansing you—stay the course.

God bless you.

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