



Episode 6-5: You're Not Alone: Women and Masturbation

Resources:

Books

[You Are Not Alone - Molly Bertles](#)

[Redeeming Sex in Marriage - Soctt Mehl](#)

Website/Videos

[Transforming Love - Harvest USA](#)

[Brent and Janet Speaking Website](#)

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

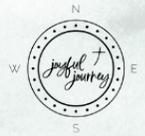
Janet: Well, hello, this is Janet with you once again with a special friend of mine today. I am doing an interview with Molly Bertles, who has just recently published a book called *You Are Not Alone*, biblical Counsel for Women Struggling with Masturbation. I am so excited that this is out there. I have read it. I highly recommend it, and I want you to learn more about the hope of the gospel that's in this book as well. So, to get started, Molly, who are you and why did you write this book?

Molly: Well, I'm thrilled to be here. I'm a big, Joyful Journey's fan. So it is surreal to be talking to you in person. And I wrote this book because this is something that I struggled with in middle and high school and never told anyone for years and years.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: I was so ashamed. I thought I was the only woman who struggled with it.

Molly: Yeah.



Molly: I looked to see what the Bible said about it and couldn't find the word masturbation in the Bible. A few times I tried to Google it and only found resources that were aimed towards men. I remember in high school youth group, they said, Hey, we're gonna have a four week series on pornography and masturbation. And I thought,

Janet: yes!

Molly: Praise the Lord. Like, okay, I'm gonna see what the Bible says about this. And then the next sentence was, but that's for the guys. The girls are gonna have a series on something else.

Janet: Probably on gossip. That's what our thing was always about.

Molly: I think anxiety, but I can't remember for sure.

Janet: Oh, anxiety.

Molly: So yes, and I just, I think that like kind of doubled down of like, okay, like not only am I sinning in this, 'cause I feel so guilty and so ashamed, it's super weird. It's super weird, it's super bad.

Janet: Yes. That's a guy issue.

Molly: Yes. So I should not tell anyone. So I just kept it inside for so long. And then finally came out, talked to my now husband, then boyfriend about it, got biblical counseling at Faith, and then got marriage counseling and really found a lot of freedom in that area, which was so gracious of the Lord, and I'm really thankful for.

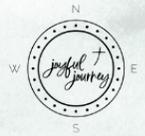
Molly: And then, years later, people were coming to me asking for advice for different things. Yes. And I started to say like, oh, you should go talk to my smart husband. That's what you should do. And I was like, that's not a good long-term life and ministry plan. So I was very confident that the Bible had answers, less confident in my ability to help people with that.

Janet: I understand.

Molly: So I started the MABC program here at Faith and

Janet: Which, just an aside, that's part of what when people give to Joyful Journey, it's for scholarships to help people like that go through the MABC.

Molly: I think I got one of those scholarships. So big fan of that too. And that was just truly life changing. It helped so much. And in the very beginning of the program, they started talking about a thesis at the end and they said, we really want you to try to find gaps in the biblical counseling literature if you can. Like we've published a lot, there's a lot out there, but try to find gaps. And I thought, Ooh, I know something that there's not a lot of information on.



Molly: So throughout the program, I would write papers on it. And then at the end wrote a thesis, which I have since adapted with Shepherd Press into a book that is like out in the world now. It's so crazy.

Janet: Isn't that crazy?

Molly: Yes.

Janet: I know. And I loved the book, but tell me more about like, who's your family? Oh, what's your ministry like?

Molly: Yes. So married to Joel, who was a faith seminary MDiv graduate a long time ago now.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: We're old. And we have five kids, so three biological kids and two foster kids. And we live in Fort Wayne, Indiana. My husband's a pastor at a church and he does a lot of biblical counseling and I counsel in our local church and then help with all of the children.

Janet: And you're a graduate of the MABC now. Yay.

Molly: And graduated last year. It took me six years. Slow and steady, but we got there.

Janet: Well, you had other things going on too.

Molly: Just a few.

Janet: So, so you've mentioned that when you initially were struggling in that area yourself, the only resources you could find were geared toward men. So. Why do you think that's a problem? What's unique about women's struggle in this area? So why didn't you read the book to men?

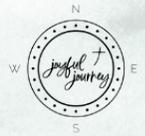
Molly: So I think there's two things. I do think the way that the church and the world talks about, although that's changing, is that it's a problem for men.

Janet: Yep.

Molly: So I've heard over and over again from women who struggle with it, that I was the first person they told that they thought that they were the only ones. I think there's so much shame and silence for women in this area.

Janet: Agreed.

Molly: Sam Alberry has a quote about people in sexual sin, and he said, the two lies that Satan tells is, you're uniquely ruined by this, and no one can ever find out. And when I read that, I just



thought like, yep, that was me to a T. I felt like I could not tell anyone. I thought I was the only one. And that kept me enslaved to sin.

Janet: It's so isolating.

Molly: so much longer than I needed to be. So I think that's part of it. And then throughout my thesis I interviewed women who'd struggled with it to get more understanding than just my experience.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: I interviewed biblical counselors, I talked to experts in the field, and I really started to see that I think there's a difference in the way that men and women are tempted with this. Obviously have not talked to men about this, but I talked to Caitlyn McCaffery at Harvest, USA, that's a ministry that helps people with sexual sin. And she's counseled thousands of women and said what she's seen over and over again is there are three stages of temptation for women.

Molly: There's the tempting fuel that they consume, and so it's content that they later fantasize about when they're masturbating, but it's usually not traditional pornography. It can be, but a lot of times it's not something that they would classify as that, but it's still something that induces lust, induces jealousy, induces something like that.

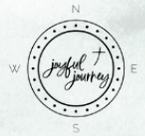
Molly: Then they have, it could be days or weeks later, they have a triggering event or a hard and uncomfortable life circumstance that they want relief from, and they'll remember that content that they consumed and then they'll masturbate after that. So it can be spread out over weeks. And a lot of women I talked to said the struggle comes out of nowhere. It's not connected to anything in my life.

Janet: Right.

Molly: I don't understand. And from the research that I read and things directed towards men, I think it's all a pretty close together, time, situation thing. And so I think separating it has helped me counsel women of, oh, we can cut off access to this content that you're consuming. We can learn God's purpose in suffering and how we can go to him when we're struggling and we can repent after we masturbate, as opposed to just, I don't know. It's really confusing. I don't know how this keeps happening. Does that make sense?

Janet: Right. And it sounds like maybe that dynamic looks a little differently

Molly: Yes.



Janet: For men, you know, and it doesn't surprise me that even the-- you know, 'cause we're all about motives and the heart in biblical counseling, not just stop doing that act. And I love how you even mentioned that in the book, it's possible without Christ To change a habit.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: But you can't change your heart.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: And so I think knowing that men and women, we both have depraved hearts, but we tend to do things a little differently. Women are more, that's interesting to me. Even the. Whatever you call the fuel,

Molly: the tempting fuel. Yep.

Janet: The tempting fuel could even be just a romantic, nothing sexual.

Molly: Yes.

Janet: But I want that relationship.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: And so then that kind of relationship leads me to this is what ultimately I end up with the relief or the pleasure of masturbation. Where for men, I don't know if it's relationally driven at all.

Molly: And I think,

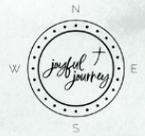
Janet: or often

Molly: I think it's harder for women to see masturbation as wrong. Because I think for men, they think, well, pornography is clearly lust, so it's wrong. And for women, if they're not consuming traditional pornography, I think they think, well, I don't even know if it's lust. It might just be a bodily thing.

Janet: Yeah.

Molly: And so it's not sinful. This isn't what the Bible's talking about. But if you get deeper below the surface of like, what are you consuming? What are you fantasizing about? What are you thinking about? There's almost always something.

Janet: There's sin in there.



Molly: Yep.

Janet: Somewhere.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: Which there's good answers for, but that's interesting. I appreciated that you also had a note to women who were victims of sexual abuse and they're now struggling with masturbation. So why did you single that out? Why did you include that?

Molly: That was because of research that I did when I was writing my thesis. I talked to people at Harvest, USA and I talked to Jacob Volk, who does Into the Light Ministries.

Janet: Okay.

Molly: And I just saw, in both of those conversations with, again, thousands of hours of counseling experience, that so many people who have sexual sin in their lives have abuse in their past, and it's really unhelpful and unloving to just go to the fruit issue of, well, you should stop doing this action if you have not dealt with, what is God's character in this? Why did this happen? That's kind of focusing on the wrong thing. And so I think it was Jacob said, Hey, this is a really needed book. You should write this. And you should also, in the beginning of the book, have a note to these people. And then doing research too. It is just so incredibly common for women to have sexual abuse in their past.

Molly: And so I thought that was such wise advice and really wanted to be careful to address that first before going on to practical stuff.

Janet: Good. And I wanted to bring it up here for anybody that's listening, that's like, I do have sin in that area. And now it just compounds the shame I have of something that might not even be my shame, it was just splashed on me.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: And it gets mixed in with, well, maybe I am that. 'cause now look at me now, instead of going, no, we, we really need to deal with what happened to you as a sufferer first.

Molly: Yes.

Janet: And then. Maybe one of the results of that was it opened a door.

Molly: Yes.

Janet: And now learning how to not go there.



Molly: Exactly.

Janet: And so I liked that you took the time to do that. Good.

Janet: Can you just share a quick overview and I just, from reading your book, these were some of the things that you hit that I thought were helpful and listeners, you just really need to get the book. So we're not gonna get to all of it, but, how do you think sometimes the purity culture has distorted this topic?

Molly: Yeah, so I was in middle and high school when I feel like it was like the height of purity culture.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: I had a purity ring, and I feel like the teaching that I got on sex in that context was, it's bad. Don't do anything even remotely sexual. Do not dress in a way that tempts boys to lust.

Janet: Yep.

Molly: Like don't, don't, it's bad, it's dirty, it's wrong to talk about. Until you're married and then light switch, like you should be good to go and everything will be great. I also think there was like a prosperity gospel light mixed in there of if you're good, yes. If you do the right things, then everything will work out for you in marriage.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: And intimacy in all of these areas.

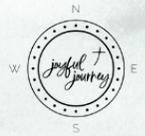
Janet: That's how you make God give you what you want.

Molly: Yes. And if you don't, if you're bad, if you're sinning in this way, you're just used up and gross and disgusting. And I don't know if it was communicated that directly.

Janet: Oh, but we hear it. Yes.

Molly: But yes, that was the image. So I think when I got married at the age of 20, I had very little understanding of God's design for sex. And even with masturbation, I didn't understand how that was a distortion of God created sex before the fall. It was good. It was beautiful. I remember your husband saying that sex in marriage is as holy to God as prayer. And I thought, I don't think that's true. I don't know if that's how it works. Like that's was just crazy to me.

Molly: And another, biblical counselor said, oh, you should, you can play worship music when you're being intimate. And I thought, Hmm, I think God's over here and sex is over here, and I don't think you're supposed to mix those things. And I grew up in a Christian school, really



involved in church and just did not have that understanding except like, well, I did sin, so maybe this is God paying me back. And maybe this is punishment and maybe this is, it's not a consequence of my sin. It seemed more directed towards like God's mad at me because I sinned. And that makes sense. So I think there's a lack of teaching, and I also think there's this teaching of a works-based righteousness.

Janet: Yeah. I think that's so true, and it's such a good reminder. I loved that you take some time in the book to look at what is God's view of sexual intimacy and the beauty of it. I mean, and, and I have had people say, but if you teach that you're just encouraging sex outside of marriage and you're really not.

Molly: No,

Janet: What it actually is can't be gotten outside of marriage.

Molly: Right.

Janet: But it is a beautiful thing and I think when we don't understand that, everything about it is wrong. And, you know, not teaching you about the beauty of biblical intimacy did not keep you from masturbating.

Molly: Right.

Janet: You know, like that was not a protection.

Molly: And made me ashamed,

Janet: it left you unguarded

Molly: to talk about it. I thought, oh, well I don't even talk about it in the right context, that I know this is something off base with that. So I definitely can't talk about this thing. I think I would have been better served to understand this is how God designed it and have it talked about. Not in a weird shameful. Don't, don't, don't, kind of way.

Janet: Right. Right. And that's why I love you do that in the book. So after we've looked at the beauty of what it is, you then go into six reasons that you believe, and I would agree that masturbation is sinful. We need to read the book to get the details, but can you just go over what those are?

Molly: Yes. So I thought this was important too because I had women say, well, I really don't fantasize about anything,

Janet: Yeah. I don't lust.



Molly: There's no lust involved.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: And again, I don't think that's true very often at all, but even if it is these six reasons I think are, for me were very convincing as I was studying.

Molly: So the first one is, it is sinful because it's pornea pornea. You would probably know how to say it better than me.

Janet: I don't know.

Molly: It's the Greek word for sexual immorality, which as I studied that in the New Testament, it's just this umbrella term. And one of the, I'm not gonna get this quote exactly right, but one of the commentaries I read said that it poses like sex within marriage and sexual immorality as like those are the two options. And so it will fall into one, like it's illicit or it's God ordained and God designed, it's one.

Janet: Right. There's nothing in between.

Molly: Yes. One of those two things. And so this would fit. Everything that I read said Sexual morality is an umbrella term that covers everything outside of sex with your spouse in a covenant of marriage.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: So that's the first reason. Then, I was gonna write down references. I'm so bad with references. Paul, talks about

Janet: They're in the book.

Molly: Yes.

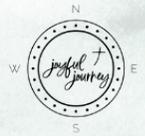
Janet: Get the book, they're in the book.

Molly: Paul talks about how if you have sexual desire, then the two solutions to that are self-control or marriage.

Janet: Yes, he does.

Molly: So he doesn't have a third option of like, oh, or you could take care of things yourself.

Janet: Gratify yourself. Exactly.



Molly: So those are the two options that he poses. Masturbation violates God's purposes for sex. There are more than I put in the book, but I talked about procreation. I talked about serving the other person.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: Which masturbation is so selfish. It's so about pleasing yourself on your terms, on your timelines, the way that you want to be. It's for unity. You don't have unity.

Molly: So it violates a lot of God's purposes for sex. It frequently enslaves believers. I saw that to be true in my life. In so many of the women I've talked to, it just turned into this entangling sin that took years and years and years, and I would promise to never do it again. And then I would.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: And I would think, well, I did it and I lied to God about it.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: I did both.

Janet: It's even worse.

Molly: It's even worse. So it frequently enslaves believers and the Bible uses a lot of language of slavery of you're slaves to Christ or slaves to sin. So I think like that's really clear that those are the two alternatives there.

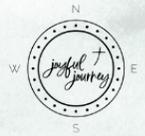
Molly: Unity with Christ precludes masturbation. When it talks about how we're temples of the Holy Spirit. This was from a seminary student's paper. He talked about how, we're temples of the Holy Spirit. And again, Paul talks about, well, you wouldn't go and have sex with a prostitute because of your unity with Christ. And he said the primary application of those verses is sex with a prostitute. But there are other applications to any kind of sexual immorality of you are saying, I am a temple of the Holy Spirit. I am unified with Christ and I'm using sex to please me with Christ there.

Janet: Right.

Molly: Which is an aspect that I hadn't thought of before and I thought that that was really compelling.

Janet: Yeah.

Molly: Then the last, that often, almost always accompanies, masturbation is sinful.



Janet: Good. Alright. And I think that's helpful and to think through, you know, when I understand more, you know, we do marriage conferences, we get to talk about the theology of sexual intimacy, when you understand that the purpose of sexual intimacy is my life for yours.

Janet: Like it's an opportunity to say, at your most vulnerable, I see all about you. The bad, the ugly physically and everywhere else and inside you. And I am devoted to your good. None of that can happen in masturbation.

Molly: No.

Janet: You know, so it's taking this good design And using it selfishly instead of for someone else.

Janet: Good. Well. We know we're all sinful. I'm gonna make that assumption. Anybody listening to this, who doesn't think they are, give me a call. That ought to be an interesting conversation. But we all sin. Somehow though this sin seems to have an inordinate amount of shame. Why do you think that is?

Molly: For women specifically, I do think the fact that it's not talked about frequently and talked about as a man's problem,

Janet: yes

Molly: adds a layer to that. I have talked to my husband about men that he's counseled and there does not seem to be the same layer. It's almost just assumed of like, oh, you're a guy,

Janet: You probably are.

Molly: you probably struggle with this.

Janet: Yeah.

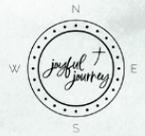
Molly: So I think that secrecy and silence adds a layer. I also wrote this reference down, 1 Corinthians 6:18 talks about how sexual sin is against your body.

Janet: Yeah.

Molly: I don't know all the details of how that works.

Molly: I know.

Molly: But as I've counseled women, there is this stickiness and residual stuff and things that just go on much longer than anxiety, than gossip, than things like that. And I do think the enslaving



nature of it. I don't know how it works with the brain stuff and dopamine, but I do think you can get in habits that your body gets used to certain things.

Janet: Yeah.

Molly: And so I think you just need, don't need, you want that thing and you feel like you need it, and so you just fall into it again and again.

Molly: And then I think there's shame there of like, I wanna stop this. I've talked to so many women.

Janet: Right.

Molly: I wanted to stop and I couldn't on my own. And so I think that just leads to hopelessness and shame.

Janet: Excellent. So we've just spent a lot of time saying we don't want women to be hopeless. We don't want them to live in shame, but we've told them it's sin.

Janet: How is knowing that it's sin and knowing that there is guilt, true guilt with it, and shame that may or may not be legitimate. How does that actually lead to gospel hope?

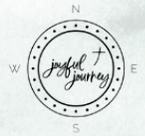
Molly: I do appreciate you pointing out the juxtaposition of that, but I think it is so hopeful because I think even before when I just had a vague sense of, I feel really bad about this. I think it's wrong, but I don't know what the Bible says about it. So I felt really confused and stuck. But I think labeling it clearly as like, oh, this is sin. This is taking a gift that God has given and using it in a way that he does not say is okay, and that's wrong. I think the Bible gives us really clear instructions of what to do when we're sinning.

Janet: Yeah.

Molly: We can confess. We can repent. We can understand how the gospel applies to this. We can understand our identity in Christ. My relationship with God was so performance based when I was struggling with this and I, whatever I knew in my head, I truly believe that when I was doing well, God was super happy and proud of me. And when I was struggling more, he was so upset and so disappointed. And so to understand, I think it was probably you to going through the Gospel Primer and talking about when we sin, we can run to Jesus in that moment and he wants to forgive us and we don't have to clean ourself up. We don't have to do penance.

Janet: Yes. Yes.

Molly: I know you have an episode on penance versus, or repentance. That was brand new to me and I think I even remember saying, I don't know if that's how it works. And you're like, Molly,



there are verses like there are verses at the bottom. This is how it works. And so to understand, oh, the gospel applies to this struggle. This shame does not have to become my identity. And my identity is in Christ and I don't have to clean myself up. I can go to him. I think is so much more hopeful than what I was living in for years and years.

Janet: Yeah. Well, and I just look at where you are and the hope that you're giving to women, because there are many women who, even if they seek help in this area would never want anybody else to know about it.

Molly: Yes. When I told Joel about it, my now husband, I remember thinking, I have to tell him. We're headed towards marriage. This would be so dishonest to keep from him. But I am never telling anyone else as long as I live. And now I'm like, oh, how the Lord laughs to be like, and you'll write a book about this someday.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: But so gracious that it took a long time to get me to this point.

Janet: And you're not here miserable that you get to talk about it.

Molly: Right.

Janet: You're here grateful that you get to give hope to people.

Molly: Yes.

Janet: 'Cause it doesn't define you anymore.

Molly: Right.

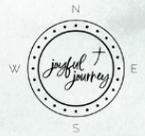
Janet: To me, that's God allowing your life to be a platform of that's what the gospel does. There's freedom there.

Molly: No, I always think of Joseph like, what you intended for evil, the Lord used for good. If you had told me 20 years ago, like, this is gonna be something that you are not enveloped in shame and wanting to talk to other people about, I would've thought you were crazy.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah. I just wanna stop. That's all I want.

Molly: Exactly.

Janet: I don't, and he's like, I have so much more. I love that. But once you get into the process and you even just alluded to it, you know that God has answers for how we change. The actual process of change that you describe in your book, I thought is so helpful. And I found myself



thinking that's really the answer no matter the sin. It's like the first part of the book helps me understand what's going on in my own heart that leads to it, but the way out is the same way out for all of our sin. It's just applied to this. So how does the fact that it's actually not different in the solution, how do you think that gives hope?

Molly: Yeah. I think sexual sin feels like this mysterious, like gray fuzzy thing of like, well, I don't even know how I'm falling into it. I don't know how to get out of it. Masturbation can feel so enslaving that it just feels like you're stuck. But I think the principles of put off, renew your mind and put on that does apply to any sin.

Molly: And so I appreciated getting this from Caitlin and then expounding upon it in the book of like, okay, how do you do that with the content you're consuming? How do you cut off access? How are you ruthless? How do you, Matthew five, if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off? How do you do that specifically and intentionally with accountability with community to the things?

Janet: Yeah.

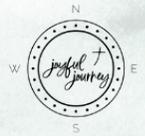
Molly: Okay. That makes sense. Like you could do that. That is something you can follow. How do you renew your mind? How do you think of things that are pure and true and righteous, and how do you put on replacing those things with, okay, I was filling my mind with these things. Now I'm going to do this with the triggering events.

Molly: I think understanding God's purpose in suffering is another thing that I don't know how much I was taught growing up, and I do think it's so easy to think, Ugh, this is hard. I just want to feel good. I think culturally

Janet: I want relief.

Molly: You should feel good. You should feel happy. Life should be great all the time. And so understanding of like, oh, the Lord is doing something in the suffering. If I'm his daughter, he has promised that this is going to be for my good and his glory. I think of Jeremiah 2:13 of God talking to Israel and saying, you've abandoned me the spring of living water and dug broken cisterns that can't hold water. I think that's such a good description of idols in general, and then specifically masturbation. I've talked to so many women who I was feeling really overwhelmed. I wanted comfort. I felt lonely, so I did this. So they're going to that thinking that it will give them these feelings that they're hoping for instead of going to the Lord. So like, okay, how do we renew our mind?

Molly: How do we see God as our comforter. How do we want to go to him in those moments and know that he is really going to give that satisfaction as opposed to a moment of pleasure and then a ton of guilt and shame and regret and all of these bad feelings afterwards. And then even



with masturbation, I think putting off, that's the easiest to see of like, okay, like putting off is not doing that.

Molly: I have in the book like, okay, what does that look like practically? 'cause that can feel really hard. It can feel like you're gonna give in and talking to different people who've done a lot of counseling, they say like, go be around other people. Go for a walk, do something physical, do some jumping jacks. There are things in the moment, text somebody. I've had women text me at 11 at night and say, please pray for me, like I'm really struggling right now. And then to be able to text them back if I'm awake or text them the next day and then knowing they have that accountability

Janet: right

Molly: can be really helpful. And then I really like this too, for the renewing your mind and then putting on, I think. Like we said earlier, masturbation turns you so inward and makes you so self-focused that the putting on can be, Hey, how can I love and serve other people? I have been focusing so much on me. How can I try to serve others in my church, serve others in my community? How can I look out and serve instead of being selfish is such a good

Janet: Yeah.

Molly: Replacement of that. And I think that is again, going to lead to that joy and satisfaction and fulfillment that you're looking for.

Janet: Good. I love that. And it's, it's almost like the first part, you know, what are the inputs that I need to get rid of. I understand that's very related to masturbation. The renewing of the mind is gonna be a unique thing for each person.

Molly: Yeah.

Janet: Which is what, you know, God made us unique individuals and we don't just say, you masturbate. You need to stop thinking this and start. I don't know why.

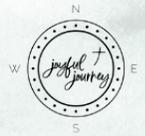
Molly: Right.

Janet: Like what's going on for you? And you mentioned suffering.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: So who'd have thought, somebody struggling with masturbation, what we need to do is a deep dive into understanding purposes of suffering.

Molly: Yes.



Janet: But very possibly because that's what's the heart behind looking for instead of just stop being selfish. Stop doing that. Start doing this. It's what's drawing you there and what's better about the gospel.

Molly: Yes. And getting to the heart of the things be of like, okay, you're wanting comfort

Janet: Which can be unique.

Molly: Why? Like what are you looking for in those areas? And getting below the surface, I was talking to someone and said, I really hope what people get out of the book isn't just like, just stop masturbating, like that would be a success. Because it's so much more than that and it's so much deeper.

Molly: And if you do not replace it and depend on God's spirit and really, truly lead to change. Like it's just gonna pop up either there in a different way. You have to get to the root things

Janet: right.

Molly: And not just the fruit.

Janet: And then as we say a lot, and then not just say, don't do that. Stop being that way. But show them something better.

Molly: Right.

Janet: You know? And the Bible has a better answer than Janet avoiding all suffering.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: There's a better answer.

Molly: Yep.

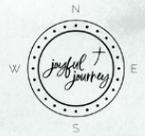
Janet: There's a savior who walked towards suffering. And he did that for the joy that was set before him. It's like, okay, what did he know that I don't know that I need to learn and learning to live for the next life, and understanding what this one is for.

Janet: So I'm not so surprised that there's pain. It's like there's so many deep truths that may be impacting the temptation to masturbation that masturbation is the fruit.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: And it's a fruit we wanna cut off, but we want to deal with the root.

Molly: Yeah.



Janet: I love that.

Molly: So that you can image God like we are created to be image bearers. And if you're stuck in the sin that you're too ashamed to talk about that you're really self-focused on, you are not going to be thinking, how can I love and serve God and advance his kingdom and push back the darkness? Like that is not where your mind's gonna be going. So seeing this is like,

Janet: it's how do I hide?

Molly: Yes. This is like stopping me from doing what God's created me to do is like a helpful piece of it too.

Janet: Excellent. So for any woman listening today who might be helping someone else or more likely they're secretly battling masturbation or maybe just enslaved and not even fighting it.

Janet: And they're listening to this, honestly, the first thought could be, I try to just not think about it. I try to separate that from the rest of my life. And so now I feel even worse because we're talking about it and admitting that it's wrong. Like what would you wanna leave them with?

Molly: Yeah. And I totally, I think because of my experiences with struggling,

Janet: yes.

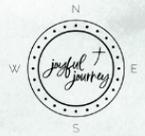
Molly: I understand how hard it is, how hopeless it feels, how you do just feel trapped in it and like you can't stop and like change isn't possible. So I would want to be so sympathetic to that and also say it's probably God's grace that you're listening to this and that you are hearing people talk about it clearly and talk about what the Bible says.

Molly: And I think there is, I tried to hide for years. Well, I don't really know for sure. So I'm just gonna keep going. And that did not lead anywhere good. It just lengthened my misery with it. So I think understanding you're not uniquely ruined by this. You're not gross or manly or disgusting. I think the fact that like Jesus came to save us from sins,

Janet: yes

Molly: like all sins, including this one, is such good news. And I would really encourage you to talk to someone about it because I think sin thrives in the darkness and just keeping it in there. I've had so many women who've talked to me about it and said, you're the first person I've told. And that is just such a first step in getting help and getting accountability and walking through it with community. We cannot change on our own. Like sanctification is not a solo sport.

Janet: We weren't designed to.



Molly: No. I tried. It does not work. So, just having like a safe friend that you can talk to who loves the Lord, who loves you and getting out in light.

Molly: There are also so many more resources available now. There's the book, there are harvest USA has a six video episodes. They're 30 minutes each called Transforming Love and they walk through a lot of different sexual and it's that just masturbation.

Janet: I will see. Is that something we can even link?

Molly: Yes.

Janet: In our show notes?

Molly: Yes.

Janet: Okay. We will do that.

Molly: We can link in the show notes because I've had people say, well, what if I don't have anyone to talk to? I think a person is always better, but you could go through this course on your own. It's free, it's self-paced, and it talks about how the gospel applies to these in a really practical, specific way. But I think it just, even if it's uncomfortable thanking the Lord that this topic was brought to you and going to him with it and realizing this does not have to be your identity, I think sexual sin becomes our identity so, so easily in a way that seems different than other sins.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: And to know like, nope, like the gospel covers this, and you're Christ's daughter and that is your identity. And then taking steps to move forward and knowing you don't have to be stuck and you can find freedom.

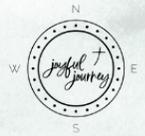
Janet: Good. So I would say, first step, pray. And maybe a next step prayerfully consider one person that you can tell.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: I would hope that there's a relationship with your pastor or pastor's wife, or if you're in a Bible study, that leader, if you have a good friend, a good friend, certainly not put it on a billboard

Molly: Right.

Janet: To people who will use it



Molly: appropriate disclosure

Janet: you, but one person and think it's a risk, but the reason you're doing it is because you want to honor the Lord and you want help. God is already pleased, even if that person doesn't know how to handle what you told him. God is pleased. You have honored the Lord and said, I want to honor you Lord, more than I want to protect myself from any risk.

Molly: Yes.

Janet: Because it feels, I believe way riskier than it actually is.

Molly: Yes.

Janet: But it does feel that. So finding someone and I think it'd be ideal, if you want to watch the videos that we will link in the show note, have somebody to watch them with you.

Molly: Yes.

Janet: Or if you're not ready to do that yet, at least watch them and ask the Lord as you think about it more biblically for the grace to go talk to somebody. Sin does love the darkness. Things feel so huge.

Molly: Yes.

Janet: I have had women tell me things and then I will look at them and say, 'cause they'll tell me you're the first person I've ever told whatever that's so shameful to them. And I will say, well, look around. Nothing changed. Like we're still sitting here. I still love you. God is on the throne. Whatever you thought would happen When you finally verbalized it didn't happen.

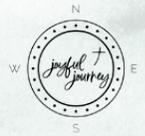
Molly: Yes.

Janet: You know, but you don't know that till you verbalize it.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: So take that first step because of the gospel. So anybody listening that may not know the Lord, The first answer is to know that there is a God who knows all about it. And his arms are open. And to know that he came so that all of our sin and depravity he took on the cross.

Janet: You know, if you think about what I know about my own heart, I was just telling somebody this recently as I was sharing the gospel with them, I killed God. Like it says, my iniquity is what put him on the cross. So what in the world could you tell me about yourself that's worse than what I have already done to God? And how did he respond to that? I took all of your



sin and my arms are open, humble yourself and come to me and I will cover you with my righteousness.

Molly: I have a whole chapter on shame because I think that is so specific and just seeing how Jesus identifies the shameful experiences that he had. How Psalm 113 talks about like he plucks us out of the trash sheep and sets us with princes, like how God absorbs our shame, how he dresses us in robes of righteousness. I think there is so much beauty and truth is

Janet: yes

Molly: but you're right. People do think like, no, it will be the end of the world if I tell anyone.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: Like, No, It really won't.

Janet: Start with the gospel. If you don't know the gospel, you can get this book, read it, and focus on that chapter, which is gonna help you see what Jesus did to cover you. With that covering, if you think about it, what do you really have to fear?

Molly: Yeah. Yeah, you can talk about it on the podcast.

Janet: Exactly. And you're still covered in the righteousness of Christ and giving hope to other people. And all it does is magnify the glory, the beauty, the power of God.

Molly: Yep.

Janet: So hopefully for any woman listening that would be an encouragement. As we end, are there any other resources that you could recommend?

Molly: So in the back of the book, I have them broken up into sections. So there's a section about abuse, there's a section about marriage. This book really is not about after you're married. There can be struggles in marriage, there can be struggles with intimacy in marriage. This book, that's outside of the scope of this book,

Janet: It's not that. Yep.

Molly: But there are a list of resources in the back. There's a list for pornography, there's a list for masturbation. There's a list for sexual sin in general. So I really do think the church is catching up to, like the world is discipling people in the area of sexuality and the church needs to be there to

Janet: yes



Molly: speak the truth and God's design. So I think there are a lot of resources. None are coming to mind off the top of my head, but in the back of the book.

Janet: But they're all in there.

Molly: They're all in the book. And then the Transforming Love series, specifically for women who feel stuck in this, it is so gospel centered. It is so practical. It is so gracious and gentle. Ellen and Caitlyn are the ones who go through it and they're fantastic. So I just keep telling everybody about that series.

Janet: That's excellent.

Janet: In general and I don't know if you had this listed in the back of the book, it's not about masturbation, it's about understanding what sexual intimacy in marriage is designed to be. Scott Meld, his book just came out Redeeming Sex and Marriage I think is very good.

Molly: A friend was just telling me about that earlier today. Yes, I read that for part of the research for mine, and it is fantastic.

Janet: Yes.

Molly: So that is, I can't remember if that's in the back of mine either, but there are really good resources out there about God's design for sex, if that is something that you were not taught as well.

Janet: Part of this can be that as well. Excellent. Well, thank you so much for coming. Why don't I pray for those listening before we go.

Janet: Father, this is a topic that almost just like talking about sex in general, talking about masturbation is something that we don't do enough. But there is such hope here. So I pray for any women listening. I pray that they would be amazed by the gospel, amazed by the hope that you offer. And I pray that you might use this book that Molly has written to give hope and guidance and direction to women who may have been enslaved to masturbation for a long time.

Janet: But don't have to be. And God, even while they are and while they're in process for those who have already come to you, they're your beloved children. And for those who have not, I pray that even their inability to change in this area might draw them to look to you and to see the hope that you offer.

Janet: So I pray for women to come to know you through this and for women who know you to be drawn closer to you and being able to live in confidence and without shame because you took all of that on the cross. And in doing that, father you are glorified. And so we give you the glory for all of it. Amen.



Molly: Amen.

Janet: Alright, thank you, Molly.

Molly: Thank you.

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