

# PORNFREE RADIO

## 023 Our Greatest Trap in Life

Welcome to Pornfree Radio, I'm Matt Dobschuetz. This is the podcast for people who want to live 100% porn free. On today's episode we're talking about our greatest trap in life. And before I get started, I want to welcome all of you new listeners who have been coming in from Twitter and Facebook. We got a ton of Twitter followers this week. Lots of direct messages on Facebook and it's just been great. The word seems to be getting out either through social media or people referring people to the show and I can't wait to share content with you and hear about your stories and help you navigate out of porn addiction.

Now if you are new to the show, [Episode 1](#) and [2](#) are really the foundation of my story. Episode 1 was called Coming Clean. [Episode 2](#) is called Unlovable. They talk about my addiction to pornography that started as a very young child and went up to my 30's when my wife caught me downloading porn on my family computer and just the aftermath of what happened from that discovery.

It's been quite a journey over the last years since that discovery and a lot of that is documented in this podcast and things I'm sharing in stories I share. [Episode 9](#) has been a great source of downloads. I believe it's probably our 2nd or 3rd most popular show. It's called The Key to Successful Porn Addiction Recovery. You definitely want to check that one out.

Episode [16](#) and [17](#): with Craig Perra who's a certified life coach and the founder of [The Mindful Habit](#) method of porn addiction recovery, which in an online program. Those have gotten a lot of response, a lot of emails and those are definitely worth checking out. Craig has a tremendous amount of energy and is an exciting dude to listen to and real inspiring. His own story is great and just what he's made of his life since coming out of porn addiction about 4 or 5 years ago has been amazing.

So, our greatest trap in life is today's topic. It comes from a quote from Henri Nouwen who is a priest and a writer. Before I get to the quote, I want to talk about a need that we have and this is actually from another priest. It's just incidentally two priests in a row that I'm quoting. This is from Gregory Boyle who wrote a book called *Tattoos on the Heart the Power of Boundless Compassion*.

Father Boyle works in Los Angeles with ex gang members in a restorative process to take people out of gangs and help them recover their lives and he had a quote in his book *Tattoos on the Heart* that I love. It's "the self cannot survive without love and the self starved of love dies." He kind of starts with this idea of love being at the core of our greatest need in life. The human heart's greatest need is to be loved and that our self cannot survive without love.

Now how does this tie in with porn addiction? Well, I think many of us are looking for affirmation in porn. We're looking for love, literally. Porn is so tied in to intimacy. It's so tied in to this idea of being seen and connected that it serves as a substitute for the love that we're looking for. I talked about how in my life one of my greatest lies at the core and I talk about this in Episode 2 was this idea that I felt unlovable. That porn in some ways was my attempt to feel lovable; that the connection and the intimacy in porn was a way that I tried to feel love.

So, anyway, how do we get to this Nouwen idea that our greatest trap in life, so let me get to it. He wrote a book called [\*Life of the Beloved\*](#) and it's a letter, a series of letters to a friend. He and this friend, named Fred, I'll just tell you his last name Fred Bratman, who was a reporter and journalist. It was a secular guy, a guy who lived in New York City, I think he wrote for The New Yorker and maybe some other magazines or something like that and somehow he sparked up a friendship with Father Nouwen.

At some point, Fred said to Father Nouwen, hey could you write a book for someone like me who kind of lives in a secular world and isn't a person of faith? Can you write something that will help me? I gotta be honest, I was kind of interested in what Father Nouwen would respond to his friend Fred. Partly because since I've been hosting this podcast I get a lot of emails from people who are people of faith and are choosing to leave porn partly because of a spiritual desire. But I'd say that I also get a fair amount of people who don't have a particular faith that they're following. They just feel called to leave porn. Either they've had trouble in their marriage or it's caused them... they've dealt with the consequences of sex addiction in their lives and they just want freedom.

So I was thinking about this relationship that Fred had with Fr. Nouwen and I was thinking about some of you who don't come from a faith background. I thought I'd share a couple things that Fr. Nouwen writes for those of you out there who are living more in a secular world.

Fr. Nouwen was just thinking about this thing and he was like, what can I say to my friend, Fred? What can I say? What's the most important thing to communicate to Fred? He basically comes down with this idea is that you are beloved. He says it like this:

All I want to say to you is this: You are the beloved and all I can hope that you can hear these words as spoken to you with all the tenderness of

force that love can hold. My only desire is to make these words reverberate in every corner of your being. You are the beloved.

Now he gets this phrase beloved specifically from a story in the Bible where Jesus is being baptized by John the Baptist. It says in the Bible that a voice from heaven came and it said, "You are my son, the beloved, my favor rests on you." [Luke 3:22] So it's this idea that God himself speaks of his love of his son, Jesus and he calls him the beloved.

What Nouwen says is that we're all beloved. That is the core of all of our existence. We were created by our Creator and that he loves us with the same love that he spoke over his blessing of Jesus. That you are my son, the beloved, my favor rests on you, that all of us in our DNA are beloved, and that's the core of our identity.

Now there is a theological perspective there that you have to kind of buy into. But just hear this thing, this idea that essentially at your core you are lovable, that there's something good that's been created in you. Not that you're necessarily in and of yourself or that you're identity is based on what you've done or your good works but that at your core you've been designed by your creator. There's something good in you that's lovable, that you bear the imprint of your creator. That's the core of your existence.

So Nouwen goes on to say that our greatest trap in life is actually self rejection. It's not addiction, it's not focusing after greed or other sorts of prideful type activities, but it's actually self rejection. He writes:

As soon as someone accuses me or criticizes me, as soon as I feel rejected, left alone, or abandoned, I find myself thinking, well that proves once again that I am nobody. My dark side says I am no good. I deserve to be pushed aside, forgotten, rejected, and abandoned. Self rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the beloved.

Being the beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence. I thought about this and it really lines up with my experience of porn addiction. That every time I sought porn to meet that lie that I was unlovable, to cover that lie, it actually left me feeling more abandoned and more rejected. That statement, well that proves once again that I'm a nobody, is what I felt like after every time I acted out. It really did go against this idea that I'm loved. Acting out with porn and going after that didn't serve me well.

When my wife caught me looking at porn all those years ago and as I started telling people about my addiction and my struggles, a strange thing happened. People heard what I said, heard what I shared, and started expressing their love for me. With the hiddenness out of the way, I was able to receive more of their

love. I notice, too, when I went to church even, that I started feeling more of God's love.

Many times I describe sitting in church sort of in the back row feeling kind of like a second class Christian because what happened was no matter how much I sang about God's love for me or sang songs of praise and kind of worship at my core I felt unlovable. At my core, I had fallen into the greatest trap in life of self rejection. That I basically said I'm not lovable. Why would anyone love me? Why would God love me? Why would my friends love me? Why would my wife love me because I feel unlovable. Porn actually kept up that lie. It kind of perpetuated it by continuing to go to it, I was continuing to reject myself and to say I'm not worthy of real love.

Right now I just want you to take that phrase beloved. Take that verse in, you are my son, the beloved, my favor rests on you. There's a still, small voice that speaks that to you that you are beloved. It's part of your DNA. It's part of your core existence.

There's other verses in the Bible that say, I have called you by name from the beginning [Isaiah 43:1]. You are mine and I am yours [Song of Solomon 2:16]. You are my beloved, upon whom my favor rests [Luke 3:22]. I've molded you in the depths of earth and knitted you together in your mother's womb [Psalm 139:13]. I've carved you in the palms of my hand [Isaiah 49:16] and hidden you in the shadow of my embrace.

There's a voice in all of us that speaks of this truth. I'm hoping that right now that resonates with you, that you're beloved. If you find yourself sort of reacting to that like I don't believe it or having resistance, ask yourself are you continuing to reject yourself? Are you saying yes, but I'm unlovable? Are you agreeing with that lie?

My only desire is to make these words reverberate in every corner of your being: you are the beloved. What a great phrase. I love that. He goes on in this book. This book is called again [\*Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World\*](#) by Henri Nouwen. He goes on to actually break this into four parts. He goes on to break this into four parts of this idea of becoming beloved.

He talks about the first part being chosen, that we were chosen by our creator, that we were created by him. That he has a purpose in our life. He talks about the need for a blessing. This is a place where I really feel called to bless you. It's not good enough just to be created and have this sense of being beloved in your DNA but that externally, you need to be blessed. I just want to be a part of that, of blessing you and saying that you are worthy of love—that you are lovable. That no matter what you've done with porn or sexual addiction, that you are still lovable, that you are still beloved. He talks about being chosen, being blessed.

Then he talks about being broken. This probably is the most important chapter for us on this podcast. He basically says that we were chosen and created that we're blessed and that we're beloved. But he talks specifically about our brokenness. That acknowledging our brokenness is key to our growth and to our becoming the beloved and fully becoming known and loved even in our broken places in regards to our relationship with God and even our friends.

He actually goes into our sexuality and I just wanted to read this one quote:

It's obviously that our brokenness is often most painfully experienced with respect to our sexuality. My own and my friends' struggles make it clear how central our sexuality is to the way we think and feel about ourselves. Our sexuality reveals to us our enormous yearning for communion, the desires of our body to be touched, embraced, and safely held belong to the deepest longings of our heart and are very concrete signs of our search for oneness.

He talks specifically about his own struggle as a priest having an unhealthy dependence on a friendship. It was a real source of pain for him. I just was really touched by this particular chapter that this idea that this isn't a book that's based in just sort of happy-joy-joy kind of teaching about God's love for us. We've all heard that God loves us and those types of phrases. But he goes specifically into brokenness and the truth or the reality that we're beloved that we're blessed and that we are broken at the same time.

Boy, I could just quote this book all day. In this broken chapter he writes:

The great spiritual call of the beloved children of God is to pull their brokenness away from the shadow of the curse and put it under the light of the blessing. This is not as easy as it sounds. The powers of the darkness around us are strong and our world finds it easier to manipulate self rejecting people than self accepting people. But when we keep listening attentively to the voice calling us to the beloved, it's possible to live our brokenness. Not as a confirmation of our fear, that we're worthless, but as an opportunity to purify and deepen the blessing that rests upon us.

So catch that. This is what we're doing in this podcast and in this community of people who want to live porn free. We are walking out this idea of pulling away from our brokenness in the light of our blessing. We're not hiding anymore; we're not living under shame or the curse. We're not living in isolation or aloneness. We are trying to walk out the call as beloved. We're walking out what it means to be self accepting people.

I am Matt Dobschuetz and yes, I struggle with porn addiction. That is been a key struggle in my life. But it is not my definition. It is not a confirmation of my worthlessness. It is merely a sign of my brokenness. But I'm loved. I'm beloved. That's the truth and I can walk in that blessing. And you can, too. You are not

your brokenness. You are not your sex addiction. You are not your porn addiction. You are a beloved child of God and that's what he's getting at.

So you're chosen, you're blessed, you're broken. The last part is you're given. If you're a Catholic you might pick up on this. This is sort of the idea of Communion, when the bread is broken. The bread is chosen and taken. The bread then broken and it's blessed. Finally it's given. That idea is given, what he defines it as is we're gifts to one another. As we walk this out as beloved children of God. As we walk out our calling in the light that we're become good gifts to one another.

I think this is totally true. I've seen this in my own life. Who would have thought when my wife caught me downloading pornography in 2001, almost 13 years ago this year I believe... Who would have thought that would lead to me leading a support group at church for the last 11 years? For people with all sorts of brokenness whether it's coming out of sexual abuse, whether it's sexual addiction, whether it's gender identity and other struggles... My brokenness and the truth of my brokenness and walking out what it means to be beloved actually created a safe place for a lot of other people to do the same thing.

I believe that the same is true for you. That right now in your community there's people hurting and addicted to porn. You can be a voice of someone who helps. That you're brokenness and the truth of your brokenness and your calling as someone who walks out and just someone who walks out being beloved and the truth of that, you can call that out in them. You can bless their belovedness and tell them that their lovable. And tell them that their lovable even though they feel like crap because of their addiction. Isn't that great?

So I know this went a little long today and I hope that you got the intent of this book. It's such a great, powerful book. You could probably read it in a day. I actually got it at my library so it's a book that's been around for quite a long time. A lot of libraries might have it. Check out *Life of the Beloved* by Henri Nouwen. This week, practice listening to that small voice that says you're beloved. Try to discern when you're feeling crappy, when you experience rejection, when you experience a strong negative reaction to you, make sure that you're not agreeing with a sense that you're worthless. Make sure that you're not giving any room to that lie in your life because the core of your being is beloved.

If this show has been helpful to you, I'd really appreciate it if you could take our survey. You can go to [pornfreeradio.com/survey](http://pornfreeradio.com/survey). [Thanks again for all your feedback. The survey is now closed.] It'll take you about 10 minutes. I'd love to get more feedback from you about what topics are important to you. What would help you in your journey and just hear more about your story.

Also, as we've been getting some of these survey results in, the number one way people are finding out about Pornfree Radio is from iTunes. [iTunes](#) weights

reviews, rates subscriptions as their way to determine what the most valuable podcasts are. So if you haven't already subscribed, go to [pornfreeradio.com/iTunes](http://pornfreeradio.com/iTunes) and that will allow you to subscribe in iTunes. It'll give you the correct link. That will really help.

Also, if you could leave a rating and review I'd like to thank you right now. We've gotten some great reviews and ratings recently and I'm proud to say that we're now a 5 star rated show which is great for us. I just want to keep the momentum going and continue to get new listeners through iTunes because people are searching things like porn addiction, porn recovery, and they're looking for help and I love to be a resource for those folks. So would you do those two things? Take that survey at [pornfreeradio.com/survey](http://pornfreeradio.com/survey) [now closed] and if you haven't reviewed or rated our show in iTunes, go to [pornfreeradio.com/iTunes](http://pornfreeradio.com/iTunes) [by all means, still do this!].

All right. Well, we'll talk to you next week. Thanks again for listening. This is Matt Dobschuetz for Pornfree Radio. See ya.