

Bob and Dannah Gresh

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SPEAKERS

Mike Stone, Bob Gresh, Dannah Gresh



Mike Stone 00:14

Hey guys, welcome back to Behind the Mike: Conversations of Hope. You know, we've had some episodes on pornography in the past. And some of you wonder, why do we talk about this so much. Being at covenant eyes, I have seen more in the past year of how pornography is destroying the core of a family, of marriages of relationships. And I recently read a book that just came out by Bob and Dannah Gresh, and asked them to join us on the podcast today. Talk about the topic of that book. You guys have an amazing testimony, Bob and Dannah, thank you so much for joining us today.



Bob Gresh 00:53

It's great being here.



Dannah Gresh 00:54

It's our pleasure.



Mike Stone 00:56

Let's talk about who you guys are. So you both are authors. podcasters, you guys do it all, basically. And the book that I'm referring to is not happily ever after, but happily, even after. That's a leading title there. So let's talk about that. You guys are familiar with the problem of pornography--very intimately. Can you talk a little bit about that, and what the purpose of this book was?



Bob Gresh 01:29

Well, since I was about 12 years old, I have struggled with pornography on and off in a cyclical

way. I always took it I remember the first time I saw pornography, it's, I know where I was, I know what it was, like, I know, the heat in the room. It was like a, it makes me think of as a real, you know, spiritual warfare experience, I guess, because many people remember that. If you ask guys, if they remember, the first time they viewed pornography, a lot of people know that. But it became a real struggle in my life. I was always pretty open about it, and transparent, but there didn't seem to be a lot of answers. And that started escalating into other things. At some point, I had to sit down with Dannah a few years ago. And I guess the, I guess the phrase I used was, I need to tell you something, because my only way back to God is probably to break your heart. And explain to you what I've been doing and the things I've been struggling with. And that was a really, a really rough time. And we've had access to some resources that maybe other people don't have access to. But we found that I found that what helps me the most is accountability. Daily, not just weekly. And I think I was thinking this morning about what I would be doing if I didn't, if I hadn't had the struggle, would I have been active with other men? Would I have participated a lot I think, what keeps me participating with men and community is the battle I faced with with lust and pornography, and how it affected our marriage.



Mike Stone 03:08

You know, so what I've seen through covenant eyes, and Bob, by the way, I'm with you, I remember that first time that I saw that. And it's like, your senses are just very heightened. And you remember that it's like an experience. And, you know, for me, and probably most guys, it was out of curiosity, and fairly an innocent moment, but it quickly turns into something that spirals out of control. I mentioned, working for covenant eyes. And I've seen, I've heard stories from so many people that are using covenant eyes and how their their lives are destroyed by it. I think it's important to understand that this is an issue. It's even scientific. And in your book, you go through some of that, and why, why this is so addictive. And I know you don't necessarily like the word addiction, but it it really is. That feeling of this is out of control in my life. You also allude to the fact that, hey, when you get married, it's not gonna be a problem anymore. Can you guys speak to that?



Dannah Gresh 04:10

Well, you know, I think we both believed that when we got married, it would go away. Because Bob was really honest with me before we got married, that he was struggling with this. And we just thought it'll stop.



Bob Gresh 04:26

Right? Sure. Once you get married, and you can actually have sex, why would you participate? back then? It was magazines, but why would you look at things you can actually do things right? Yeah,



Dannah Gresh 04:36

right. We find that that's a lie that a lot of couples fell for. And so last, and pornography have almost nothing to do with real sex which God created to be about intimacy. The mechanics of it

almost nothing to do with real sex which God created to be about intimacy. The mechanics of it are just a piece of the greater purpose which is growing closer in intimacy with each other, and of course porn. geography aborts you from intimacy entirely. So they're really not related. And for me as a wife, who was heartbroken by it, the science was really an important piece for me in developing empathy for the battle he was facing. I think so many times, wives react with hatred and anger, and punishment or self loathing. This is my fault. And I beautiful enough that. And those two polar opposites don't really move you towards a solution. But when you start to understand the science of it, when I started to understand the science of it, I had empathy for him. And my vows kicked in, in sickness or in health, I promised to care for him, he promised to care for me. And pornography, if you really study the addiction model, which it's not that we don't like the word addiction is that we use it carefully because it can be a word that we use to replace sin. But what began as a sin problem, or even if you go back to little boy, Bob, I don't know that it was a sin problem. It was a curiosity problem. That then morphed into a sin problem that then became a an addiction or brain problem, because the the chemical of dopamine, which is created in the brain, when you look at pornography, or experience, any kind of pleasure, is really damaging if you overdose on it. And it's part of the reason why a heroin addicts brain is so pockmarked and destroyed. And if you put a heroin addicts brain next to a porn addicts brain, they look almost the same. They are eaten up now we're not talking about like, this is the functional ability of the brain, a brain scan that shows how a brain is functioning looks like Swiss cheese. That's how destroyed a brain is after cyclical use of pornography. And when I saw that, I changed from a woman who is ticked off at my husband or in that self loathing place because I vacillated right? To a woman who was like, okay, for right now. I have to be strong enough to help my husband, who's not well. And that was a big change for me a shift in my heart and my mind.



Mike Stone 07:29

I think that's so important, because I think the way you experienced it is very natural, a natural reaction, you know, you've hurt me, how can you look at anybody else? Why am I not good enough? Those things that I've heard over and over again. And I think that the change can really begin not that those things are not valid, because they are, but the change can begin when you see it the way you're talking about. It's so important to understand that this really is that type of addiction, and how it how physiologically it affects you. And I got I don't I don't know how to. I mean, covenant eyes has a has an ebook called Your Brain on Porn. And I think that helps explain the physiological part of that too. And why that dopamine rush and all that stuff, how it all fits together and really becomes an issue. You know, it's not just something you can say I'm done with. It really is an addictive issue. One of the things I really so there's actually two things I want to talk to you about quickly, and that's we have a lot of resources out there for men and even women who are struggling with pornography. We see stats that say, seven out of 10 guys in the church are struggling with pornography, one out of three women are struggling with pornography. So there's a lot of resources out there for those who are struggling, but for the married couples, and this is your case, Dannah, when Bob comes to you and tells you this and drops this heavy load on you, we've got resources for him. But there's not a lot of resources out there for women, or for the spouse who's whose husband or wife is dealing with this pornographic struggle. And that's what your book really tackles. Can you talk a little bit about that? Because that's an important issue that the society overlooks?



Dannah Gresh 09:20

Absolutely. I've described it as it felt like Bob was driving your car down the road and he drove

Absolutely, I've described it as it felt like Bob was driving our car down the road, and he drove us into a tree and the ambulance comes and at triage is both of us were both bloody, but his, his injuries are much more life threatening than mine. So the ambulance puts them in a gurney, they bandaged him up and that can hear the siren fading into the distance as I sit there and think, what about me? Who's gonna take care of me? Yeah. And there's two answers to that. One is that I had to learn that I had to take care of me that I had to. And that's a hard truth. Some of the hardest truths I heard, were the most heart saving truths. But you do have to do your own work, the husband has to do his work, the wife has to do her work. And then when you do your work independently, you are so much more effective when you come together. But I did go through a lot of years of just reading stuff that hurt, like added salt to the wounds that his pornography addiction had created. Because the traditional old model was, oh, you're codependent. If you're married to an addict, you must be a co addict. And that was the conventional wisdom for a long time. And then they started to look at the brains of women and get to know them. And they said, No, this woman isn't a co addict, but she's experiencing some trauma. And she's not herself right now. And they would see these women go from strong, independent, capable community contributors to not Well, women. And then with the right nurturing and health, they would get well again, and what they discovered is that about 70% of wives who are married to pornography, addict, addicts, are experiencing symptoms of PTSD. Now, that doesn't mean they have PTSD is not a diagnosis, but for a period of time. That's the power of the impact, that the pornography has that cycle, that not knowing what's true. And that's what's not true. Bob wasn't really deceptive with me. But he didn't want to hurt me. I never caught Bob, he confessed his sin. But he didn't want to hurt me. And I knew there was something you just know, your body tells you there's something wrong, before your heart is really even ready to admit it. So we wanted to create something that was predominantly for the wives first, because there's such a vacuum of that out there. And then we have a podcast so we can bring the husband's into the conversation.

B

Bob Gresh 12:09

And I was deceptive in the way that I manipulate situations, I would only ask the questions that were asked to me it was I'd be very specific about the answers. And so it does, what I saw happening was it started to have, I didn't realize this at the time. And I didn't, I couldn't understand at the time, but I could start to pinpoint the times I was acting out. And her health issues like sometimes within within an hour's within an hour, I'd be like she was doing okay. And then I did this and she meetly It kept lining up and I found it. That's what really pushed me over the edge was I felt like I brought I had brought sin into the house and spiritual warfare was happening. I didn't understand the physical thing. I since we you know, Dannah has researched we've researched it, we see that there is a physical there is physical consequences to the guys from one spouse to porn, it does have sometimes physical effects on the other one without even knowing it. Yeah, try find,

D

Dannah Gresh 13:16

like we can under we understand that now. So what kind of happens is you're, you're, you're seeing things like maybe your husband is not making eye contact with you. Or if he's escalated outside of porn into meeting people or anything like that he's not present, he's not in the house as much as he's supposed to be. Or he's traveling more often, or he's just not emotionally present when his body is in the room. And a wife in her naivete wants to say, oh, that's he's just stressed out at work. So you kind of excuse all these things away. Meanwhile, your body is

creating an inflammation response in you to say pay attention to what is right under your nose. This is there's great science to prove this. And as you become more and more inflamed, you might have immune problems. You might have joint problems you might experience breathing or digestive problems, immune or inflammation, rather, is at the root of a lot of things. And we talked to a woman the other day who said she was diagnosed with lupus after her husband had multiple affairs. And fast forward their marriage did survive it and he really started walking integrity and her lupus suddenly was healed. Wow. And the science really supports that. That is possible. So a lot of fun.

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Bob Gresh 14:42

Always. That was not always a diagnosis on that. Anyway, that's a very important point. Sure is

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Dannah Gresh 14:47

just because yeah, cold. Are you your best, whatever. Doesn't mean that you need to not trust your husband, but they may be connected.

M

Mike Stone 14:54

Yeah. That's a great point. And I think so I think there's a couple things that From the book, I mean, I pulled so many golden nuggets out of that it was just really great. We'll talk about the book, specifically, but resources out there for the women. You're doing that now. And I love that. And thank you for doing that. The other thing is, you had a quote in your book that says, look around people in your church are in recovery from 1000 Different kinds of enslavement to sin, I think that we feel like and I know, the guys viewpoint or the the one that is addicted to porn, or has a porn issue feels like the shame takes over. We're not qualified, really to do much of what we're what we're supposed to be responsible for. So in the church, certainly, the shame has got me sitting in the back row, I'm not qualified to be involved in church because I've got this secret sin in my life, even if my wife doesn't know about it. Can you talk to that both of you talk to that. And, Bob, I'm sure you know how that feels and how that made you feel. You said that you were not wanting to hurt Danna by revealing this to her. But there wasn't much you could really do otherwise to other than just to tell her.

B

Bob Gresh 16:17

Yeah. And I totally get like, one of the things that I look back on is I was just telling somebody today telling the school that we started when I was talking to the student body there that there were times when in that sanctuary, I'd take communion, I take it one door and walk out the other and throw it away, because I knew I couldn't. I couldn't take it with integrity. I, you know, I felt like an outsider. When there were messages on sin, suffering from God, I was like, here's where I'm at. And when I was still a spiritual leader, I'm still a leader. And what sad for me is that because I had some internal because I was being convicted internally, by the Holy Spirit, I kind of voluntarily took myself out of things. Sometimes I thought, boy, if I wasn't so convicted, I wouldn't. This wouldn't bother me so much I could be, you know, a leader in church. There was times when Dannah would say, wow, you're the best husband. And I would think that's like

a curse. She doesn't have any idea how she's getting 10% of what I, what I couldn't be as a husband being present things like that. And I'm tricking her and she didn't really know me if she really didn't know me. But a lot of guys with a good relationship with Christ are with the conviction, the Holy Spirit, you know, we take ourselves on the sidelines, because that's kind of the right thing to do. It would be even more right to be in a group with community and be confessing our sins. But, you know, I was a ministry leader. So I had to go eventually to my board and say, I've fallen below the standards of where I need to be, I need to step down for a while. And I think because we had established ministries of grace, and we had, we're going to community graceful people, they worked with me. And I, I stayed out longer than they asked him to do just because I felt as a leader, that's what I should do to be above reproach. But I find that a lot of leaders strictly couldn't really go to their church or they'd be fired. And that's really a difficult thing. A lot of spiritual leaders who want to get better who, so they live in this, this clash of spirit internally. They don't talk about it as much, because I don't want to be hypocrites, and I want to teach on it. And it's really a it's a tough thing spiritually. And yet, it's ubiquitous all around us, and everything we do. And it really requires a real committed response.

D

Dannah Gresh 18:57

I think it's one of the greatest mission fields of our era. That, can you imagine what would happen? It's not just that the church looks at pornography as a problem. Many of the porn addiction clinics around the country are not Christian models. You have people like Russell Brand, coming out and saying, this bad stuff, don't do this stuff. It'll fry your brain. So imagine if the church began to be the place where people were set free. Well, that's not going to happen until we until we start to get honest about it. Until we start to give everybody the clinical care as well as the biblical care they need, and incorporate that with the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer.

M

Mike Stone 19:46

Wow, that's so good. And I say that so often since I started at covenant eyes, I'm seeing this and it's it's right in front of our eyes, but nobody talks about it. Nobody really wants to admit it. And let's face it, there are pastors behind the pulpit. that are fearful of losing their job if they talk about something so secular, you know, but it's a cancer in the church that is destroying it. And, and we want to turn our heads and pretend like it's not there. And I'm not really criticizing anyone because I understand. But it's time to dig in and say, this is something we need to call out it is sin, maybe addiction. But like you said, this is sin, let's call it for what it is. And let's start fighting back. And you guys are doing that. I appreciate that so much. What else can you tell us about the book, there's so much in there is there anything in particular that you want to share with the audience. And so many good things, I just want to say really quickly here, plug, get this book, it really is, if you're struggling, or you know, someone who's struggling, this is an eye opener, it's not just another book that will make you feel good at the end, this is really substance. And it will help you to understand what's going on behind this. This is evil. This is playing out plain and simple evil. That is Satan is doing a great job in this area. And nobody wants to talk about it. So it's just absolutely rampant in our society. So great stuff.

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Dannah Gresh 21:17

Thanks. Yeah. And if you know it's a book for women with we are hearing a lot of men who are the wives can't get the book as the men are reading it. They want to know how their wives think I get that. I've read a lot of books about that are written for men, so I can understand how Bob's thinking about this. Yeah, but the podcast we created for the husbands of the wives to listen to together. I think one of the things that was a real learning curve for us is that in many cases, when it has become addictive, I would say and by addiction, I mean, there's some sort of cycle, maybe it's daily, maybe it's weekly, maybe it's monthly, maybe it's quarterly. But this individual who's using the pornography just can't they want to stop, they hate their sin, but they can't stop. Okay, you are under the control of something rather than in control of it, right. So when it gets to that point, there's any kind of addiction or cycle, you don't just need biblical care, although you cannot divorce the power of God from the process because it's a sin problem, right. And only Jesus is capable of dealing with sin, you're not going to find that in behavioral science or psychology. You need Jesus to overcome sin. But many times Christian couples make the mistake of not also getting clinical care. And by that I mean somebody that understands what addiction will do to your brain, the physiological impact. And also, like, I needed somebody that understood what trauma was doing to my heart and my mind too, because my brain wasn't working very well. And a lot of times, you can do damage in helping a couple, because you don't understand the clinical needs. It's a saint, the same person in your church who is great at helping you work out how you fight about how to put the toilet paper on the roll on the toilet in the bathroom, or, or the fact that there has been no other way, but or the stocks that your husband puts on the floor every night and you have to pick up like this, the person that's great at helping you with that problem is probably most likely going to be in over their heads. Yeah, unless they themselves have walked a path like this and understand the clinical complexities of pornography addiction. So I think we're trying to get the church to wake up to the fact that yes, Freud was crazy, and he is probably at the root of a lot of our a sexual unwellness. In our culture, you can trace a lot of our sexual wellness unwellness back to him, because he thought sex was our greatest need. But he and other psychologists have given us tools to diagnose things that aren't necessarily entirely evil in and of themselves. It depends on whose tools those whose hands those tools are in. Yeah. And so, if those tools are in the right hands, with biblical care and prayer, they're great tools for diagnosing a problem and understanding how to apply God's truth. And I don't I think sometimes people are allergic to the clinical care aspect. And on the other side, some people just go off to the clinical care and they forget to integrate God's truth into it. And that's that neither of those approaches work well.

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Bob Gresh 24:42

You know, one of the things that happens that I am aware of and I felt a lot like I said before as you're singing songs, you know, in worship, you know, set me free from my chains, just layers, but even the

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Dannah Gresh 24:57

lyrics just just ran right out of your head. Yeah.



Mike Stone 25:00

But I know those lyrics.

 B

Bob Gresh 25:03

Yeah, it's, uh, but, and you, when you're in the spiritual battle, you really noticed those words. You know, it's interesting, you notice the the promises people are making with the power of God, and you don't feel it. And that is a real battle for your faith because you can say, Oh yeah, you can say that the Holy Spirit is this, that, and God, you know, there's no condemnation or whatever. But it certainly doesn't feel like that. And I think that the sad thing about that when you need your faith bolstered, it feels like it's not there. And and so what it takes is being in community, and I've just been, I've just been cognizant lately, I guess, doing interviews and stuff about how I'm how to say is how much the church is worried about behavior modification. And I think that at the point where somebody can say, hey, I struggled with this last week, or I did this, you know, on Tuesday and Thursday, and I need to confess this and share it. I think there is a need that in the church, that men can confess that they can be honest about their life and have a community that supports them. It's a complicated issue. There's no question about it. But I love the 12 step model. I think the 12 steps are, you know, amazing. There was a time I was going to 312 step meetings a week. There weren't necessarily Christians there. But they found God, eventually, a lot of them. But they were, you know, they were supporting each other. They're sharing the story, one of the very interesting things that happens is, when you go into a 12 step meeting for the first time, there can be 40 people in the room. But when you walk into the newcomer, the meeting totally changes. You get a different set of scripts. And it's TESTIMONY TIME FOR but everybody says how they got to be here totally, is like, wow, that's not part of the content we were supposed to do tonight. But by the time it gets around to that guy, there's probably about 12 people in our group. By the time I get dropped round him, he was telling us things he'd never told anybody else in the world. Yeah, because we had been open and honest. And it helped me It helped me a lot. Yeah.

 M

Mike Stone 27:27

Yeah, we talked about safe places in our churches. And I just don't think that we can just say that our churches are a safe place to talk about pornography, even in small group. I think that it's still taboo enough. And I think that's a part of the problem is that, you know, I remember a conversation, my wife and I had gone down the road one time it was in a city, and some guy was dressed up. Crazy. This was years ago, shortly after we got married. And the conversation conversation just going off on tangents. And all of a sudden, the conversation went to well, what if a naked woman was walking down the road, but you look at her? And I said, Well, yeah, and my wife has still not forgotten that years ago. Because there is there is the God given. And there is the perversion. And our society has blurred that line so much with stuff on TV, even commercials, that we feel like, we don't even know what's pure anymore, you know, the virtual reality is going to basically even further that pornography issue, because you don't need to have sex with a person. And there's that such that disconnect between the way God created sex to be and what society is portraying it to be and what it is right now. And so it is a struggle. I think we just need to get in our churches and let our pastors know that we support them talking about this issue. And, and for ministries like you guys have and taking your story, which is it's gotta be tough to talk about those things. Bob, I gotta ask, is this is this still an issue for you? Or are you cured?

 B

Bob Gresh 29:21

Bob Gresh 29:21

I'm not cured. I think it's, it's something I had to have very high boundaries around. I do use covenant eyes. I don't travel alone. Unless it's absolutely unavoidable. And I have to be very careful about what I look at, about being with being in community. And even as we started to be honest with you, even as we started this thing, last three or four months, I realized and I better get back into some of the habits I had, because this is really hard for me. I mean, I wonder if someday I've had to like, look back at this and go Yeah, that was that that was that, you know, but I don't think it'll ever get very easy for me to share the story. It's sure. It's, but no, I'm not cured. I think my brain is better. And maybe some people need to hear that. There's a cure, and it all goes away. And I've been struggling with that story. But it's not my story. Now many people that I know, tell somebody and they get it out, and they're, you know, they're, they're healed. But I, you know, I talk about addiction, kind of, like, you know, like food. I know, I'm overweight, I know what it takes to get to a proper weight. Right now today, I know exactly what to eat. Exactly. Easy. It's not complicated. I know exactly what to say no to. And yet, I will say yes to things over and over again. And I think a lot of people kind of can identify that. That kind of temptation, which is like you just constantly making wrong choices with what you eat every meal, wherever you like, I know what to do.

D

Dannah Gresh 31:11

Yeah. This is the man who came to bed last night with an ice cream cone in his hand. Oh, it sounds like

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Bob Gresh 31:19

a little for the for our grandkids. I had to, she doesn't know. But anyway. But I just leaving last I was like, this is a bad choice. It wouldn't normally be in the house and house for the grandkids. And they're, you know, and I think me I make bad choices all the time with food, for instance, when I know that I shouldn't and the times between meals is pretty easy. Yeah. Right. Yeah. So I think that the answer your question is no, I'm not healed? Yes, we have to be cognizant of the fact that I have to have boundaries. And that's very harmful to my marriage. If I

M

Mike Stone 31:58

and I wanted to. I want to just say that was a loaded question. I think in those very rare instances where God can just instantly, you know, save someone from that addiction. It is very rare. My pastor one time when I was younger, told a group of guys, he said, you know, if you think that you don't struggle with lust, you're either lying, or you're castrated. And I think that's just an issue that we deal with lifelong. And I think that was something that stuck in my mind. Because for him to say this, a guy that I respected so highly, this is a struggle you have. And I think that's what we have to come to terms with. For anyone who struggles with pornography is this is not a shameful thing. You just need and your book says it well. And you mentioned that community. We need to lay this before the Lord and be in community in safe places where we can talk about this issue. And, and accountability.

B

Bob Gresh 32:56

Yeah. And I think a lot of people will, you know, read the book, and they could assume Hey, that everything's fantastic. Now, everything's healed. There are still consequences to things I did. There's still triggers for damage at times when?

D

Dannah Gresh 33:16

Well, let me say something about that. Okay, go ahead. Triggers, were really painful for me at a certain point. And I think, you know, for anybody who's triggered by anything, you have to know when to give yourself grace. Because, oh, I can't handle that. That's too much for me right now. That brings up too much pain. I'm not healed enough. But then as God begins to heal you triggers have become for me an invitation to a deeper healing. So where I'm like, Oh, I'm in a safe relationship now. And that still hurts. So I wonder what God is illuminating. And I drill down deep into that area. And there are so many things like, for example, when we were going through the worst of this, there was a song I used a worship song that I used to comfort myself and I loved that song. And then as we progress in our healing, every time I heard that worship song, it reminded me of that pain, right? While just a few months ago, the song came on the radio or whatever. And I was like, Ah, I'm worshiping. I'm not I'm not triggered, but that's because I went to the song and I said, Okay, Lord, what's the what's your truth about this? But um, Bob is different. He is a different person who I keep telling him your brain is healing. You know if it's true, and I believe that it is that porn addicts brain looks like Swiss cheese, there's some functional deficits there. That thank the Lord like our lungs can heal. Our brains are are malleable they they can recover with time. And as you retrain them, and as you Put the right things into them. And he's calmer. There was a lot of simmering anger in his heart that it felt like maybe he was a volcano just about to go off. He never was the kind of man that like was abusive or exploded. But there was something there that I was just like, Oh, I wonder if I need to walk on eggshells today. That's, that's for the most part, God, I mean, we both still have our stuff, we're not perfect, but I can see God's healing in His just the manner in which he interacts with life. So there's hope.

B

Bob Gresh 35:38

I used to have a lot of triggers a lot of things that went on throughout my day. And I do notice now, there's not a lot of memories I have anymore, there's not a lot of things that and every guy is going to understand this. So you can you can be listening to worship music, and all of a sudden drive by and see something and immediately kind of gets you into the zone where you're like, what, what how did this happen? That happens a lot less to me. And I praise God for that I used to be to conjure up memories and you know, hit Get that dopamine hit just from the memories. But I you know, in 12 steps, they have a, they have a couple catchphrases and one of his one day at a time. So in my life, I find it to be kind of one day at a time. I have to be Be careful. I'm not like, Oh, this is great. I can go do whatever I want now and go traveling. I just don't feel there's a safety for me within boundaries. Yeah, that the boundaries are safe for me and I. I used to, I used to push against them all the time. Like, don't you trust me? Don't you do whatever. And now I find them a source of safety. That put some some fences up why need fences?

D

Dannah Gresh 36:56

Yeah. we have. Yeah. we should have had conversate. We could we had 10 years ago. if I'd

Yeah, we haven't really, we should have had conversations. We could we had 20 years ago, if we have said, you're driving from here to there does like who knows? Like, who are you talking to? And we might have an unpleasant conversation. Or I might just be afraid to do it. Because he's in a mood or whatever. And now, if he's going to buy requirement, I have to fly from here to there or whatever. I'll be like, have you talked to Mark? Have you talked to Jim? And he's like, Yep, I they know. And we're in touch. And it's just how we do life. It's are tethered to, I guess, intimacy, because they're hard conversations to have. Sometimes they don't, they're not as hard anymore.

B

Bob Gresh 37:40

No, I used to get really upset. And I think it was out of shame, it kind of kind of felt shaming. And one of the differences in my life where I was where I really took responsibility for what I've done to Dannah, and part of what has actually helped me is her use of the word that she feels safe. It's not about I don't trust you. But when you do this, it makes me feel safe. And that's a feeling I want her to have. And I think when I started to take responsibility for what I had done to her, I have a kind of interesting story. One day when she wasn't here, I cleaned the whole house that should come back and like I'm going to clean the house. It's going to be so impressed. She's going to walk in. And when she walked in, she was What were you triggered? She was triggered. And I was like, what? And she's like, this is what you did after you act it out. You kind of wanted to do penance, and you did all kinds of things. And so I say I've never let that happen again. I've never triggered her that way again. But I had to realize, I in the past would have gotten upset about that. Then I realized, yes, I did plant triggers like that. And I had to take responsibility for it. And that's made our conversations a lot easier. Because yeah, there's a humility in that.

D

Dannah Gresh 38:57

But one of the things that we've really been able to help a lot of couples with is understanding the difference between forgiveness and trust. Yeah, again, this is me releasing Bob and putting God in charge of any kind of judgment or, or penance. Because only God alone knows the depths of Bob's heart. And that's not my job. My job, according to Scripture is to forgive him. Now, premature forgiveness, I don't think is healthy. And sometimes I think I see that being forced in the church. Oh, all the guys do this. You just need to forgive them. Ah, that makes me mad. There needs to be thorough. You know, divulging of how far the addiction has gone. There has to be truth on the table. And that has to be done with the right clinical and biblical caretakers so that it's a safe experience. And then you forgive and you don't do it to you really mean it. That's my opinion. I'm not saying you don't forgive. I'm saying you know what, you're forgiving, and your heart is in the right posture to do it well. And sometimes a wife's brain is too traumatized to do it right away. And she needs the grace of some time to bandage her own wounds. But that same day, she doesn't have to say I trust you. Because the Bible actually warns us against trusting in mere humans. The only person entity we're ever told to trust is to trust in the name of our Lord our God, he's the only one we can truly ever trust. He's the only one that's not going to let us down. In our humanity, we do. And so trust is built in small little increments in steps. And as Bob goes to the 12 step meeting, as Bob makes the phone calls to his accountability, guys, as Bob talks, honestly, and doesn't get defensive, when we talk about this, then I start to have something to trust. And I think that I can defend that biblically. And that's been safe for us, it's been safe for me, it's been safe for him blind trust is not a gift to him. It's empowering. It's codependency.



Mike Stone 41:08

Yeah, I think that's really important to mention, because for those that are in the situation, you are in doubt, um, you know, I think a lot of advice is, like you said, you just need to learn to forgive. But that doesn't help anybody. And, again, this is in your book, get a hold of the book, read more in depth on that, because that's a very important topic. And I struggle even today, you know, outside of porn issues, it's anything that deals with forgiveness, and trust. There's a delicate balance there. Because, you know, I can forgive some people, but I can't trust them. And it's important to distinguish between the two. So



Bob Gresh 41:51

the other thing I would say is that you have to have trusted friends around you, in all areas of your life, for your whole life, but in your marriage, you have to have people who can tell you hard things, whether it's the husband or the wife, and stick with you. The book is just a book, like, Okay, we think it's good book, it'll help but to enact the things in the book just to be able to establish trust and establish forgiveness and stuff. Sometimes it takes a few other people to say, Okay, now it's time to, to forgive an org, or you know what he's crying. He's saying he's sorry, but doesn't look repentant to us. Because it's easy to cry, it's easy to cry and apologize. And for many years, I thought that was enough. I'm sorry. You know, what, uh, what do you want me to say? One of the big responses we're getting from the book is guys saying, you know, wife is saying, My husband said, he, sorry, it happened a month ago, it'll never happen again, stop bugging me about it. And I've been there, I've been there. And I realized, now, that was a really selfish place for me to be because I am responsible for, I think, putting in safe boundaries and allowing her to speak into him. Because I want to be, have to be a person of integrity. I want to be a person of integrity. So she can help me out. And people around me can help me



Mike Stone 43:22

with secrets in marriage are not a good thing. And so to have that openness, and to be able to be transparent with one another, as spouses is so important. I'm just really grateful for your ministry, what you guys do for both of you, being able to be transparent and share this really sensitive subject and parts of your lives that nobody wants to share. But boy, you're helping a lot of people to understand through your example, that speaking out is the start of forgiveness, and healing and all those things that need to happen in a marriage. And I've just been really disheartened. You watch the news at all. There's just a lot of stuff going on in our society today. We're just tail spinning right now. And I think that Satan loves to attack the family. That's where God started. Everything. And if he can tear apart the family, he can tear apart our society. And I think this is a big part of tearing that family structure apart and our marriages apart is through the secret sin of pornography. So thank you both so much for sharing. Is there anything you want to end with as we wrap up our time?



Dannah Gresh 44:42

Just that there is hope. I mean, you may feel broken beyond repair. But with Jesus there's

always hope. He doesn't just fix it. He makes redemption is making it better than it was before. And I I feel that way about our marriage.



Mike Stone 45:01

Yeah, absolutely. Agreed. I think that you mentioned something about I don't remember the quote, but about pain. And it was so true because we look at pain as something that's bad. But when we're going through it, there can be redemption in situations like you guys walked through. And you're seeing that now and sharing that with others. And so I thank you both so much for doing that. Because there that gives us hope. Bob and Dannah, thank you so much for your time. I know you're very busy. Love your ministry. We'll put all of the stuff I can in the show notes so people can find your website, how to get your book, all the things that you're involved in. And again, thank you so much for joining us today.



Dannah Gresh 45:45

Thanks, Mike.